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DAVID'S NIGHT AT THE JORDAN

II Samuel 17:16-21

INTRODUCTION:

You'll find the title of the third Psalm tells you that it was written by David when he fled from his son, Absalom. Our night scene sermon this hour is one of the most serene and yet tells us how he was sustained by his trust in God. In the midst of great peril and great affliction, we shall discover this night scene to be different from the witch's cave at Endor, by King Saul. This is another king, King David. And this is the first night after he has taken flight from Jerusalem. He had been driven from his throne and from the sanctuary of God by a cruel and rebellious group. He has a wave of trouble and sorrow that have gone over him. And pierced his soul.

He has spent the entire day traveling across the horrible wilderness of Judah. And now he is in a night camp on the banks of the Jordan. There earth is his bed and he talks about this in the Psalm. Messengers rushed into the camp at midnight and they alarmed the king and advised him that he was being pursued by a chosen force of 12,000 men that night.

All must arise and cross the swift and dangerous Jordan to save their lives before the morning.

Now out of this account David supplies us with an ample lesson as to what we should do when we are afflicted at all times. Here under the great excitement, the peril and the sorrow - we find indeed a deep trust in God that night as they were camped by Jordan.

Let us see if we can organize our thoughts around these words. First, rebellious son. Second, a regretful day. Third, a vengeful shimei. And fourth, a retreat by night. Fifth, a relevant sequel.

I. REBELLIOUS SON

Absalom had been planning a revolt for four years. He had used all of his powers, his personal beauty, to win the hearts of the people from the King.

15:1,2 → Early each morning, he took his place at the gates of the city, and then he would move about the entrance to the palace to make himself acquainted with all who went and came.

15:4 → If he had been giving himself to (good work) with the same zeal and the same talent that he displayed this mischief, he would have not left this sad chapter in the history of his father.

15:4 → Absalom was courteous but he was false with his expressions and interest in everything that he showed sympathy with. He drew all the hearts of the people to him. He was just like a serpent as it charms it's prey. He adds personal attention to individuals and he appeared in public before the mass of the people, with great pomp and great splendor. More so than the king.

David, the monarch, cared very little about parades. And royal show. He moved among the subjects of Jerusalem on foot. He came to the top of Olivet to worship without guards or attendants.

15:6 → Absalom rode through the streets around the city in his chariot. Attended by horsemen and foot runners who cleared the way for him, with the shout of a king.

And so the vanity of the (multitude) was in every way tempted to wish that this brilliant beautiful prince could take the place of the king.

Remember this rebellious son - all of this took place under the eyes of the fond old father, who may have been blind to what was happening. Because it is strange to say that parents are sometimes quick to read the character in others and they are the last ones to know their own children.

There are those who will judge more accurately the life and principles of one whom he meets only for an hour, than of the same one that sits at his own table, day after day.

Tragic indeed it is when there is some rebellious child.

A (Senate Committee) this past Wednesday at week ago, estimated that there are 70,000 U. S. Teachers are victims of serious physical assaults each year. And that school vandalism (costs) about half a billion dollars a year. This is caused by rebellious sons and daughters.

This survey was made in 757 school districts. And it reported that (100) students were murdered in 1973. And that hundreds of thousands of students of every section of the country are victims of assaults each year.

The report said that vandalism (costs) equal amounts spent on (textbooks) in every school in the country, in (1972). It called the estimated 400 million vandalism total staggering. By very conservative measure of the total loss to school districts. Which are paying vastly increased costs for security forces and insurance premiums.

It was noted that the cost of replacing broken windows in schools in an average big city, would build a new school every year.

The survey said between 1970-73 that assaults on teachers increased 77.4%. And assaults on students increased 85.3%. Robberies of students and teachers increased 36.7%. Rapes and attempted rapes increased 40.1%. The number of weapons confiscated from students by school personnel increased 54.4%. Now the primary findings was reported to be at a level (crisis) that demands immediate review and some legislative action.

Too often, he says, youngsters arrive at the public schools - are not finding the quiet atmosphere, instruction, and enrichment and encouragement - but instead they are dominated by fear, chaos, and violence.

I read recently of a 29 year old father who was convicted in Kingsport, Tenn., court of child abuse and he was ordered to submit in writing a report to the judge on what the Bible says about disciplining children.

The Judge George Garrott, said, I have never done this before. But he told Jerry Vermillion, I want you to read what the Scriptures say about discipline of children and submit to me some comments on what you think they mean. And he also charged this father if he did not follow his instructions that he was going to give him a year in jail.

It is fragic that here is a story of a rebellious son who is responsible for this night scene in the Bible. Now the news came to David that this wild and wicked son was already crowned and proclaimed king about 20 miles away at Hebron.

By messengers, this was brought to him, and declared unto him that the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom now. Now what shall David do - what can he do?

There was no time to be lost. There, the crowd riveled for the throne - was coming down to the city of Jerusalem. A few hours march and he would be brought right to the gates of Jerusalem. And knowing this rebellious son, he would not hesitate to murder his own father. He would add to his many crimes that he had already committed.

II. A REGRETFUL DAY

15:14

Early that morning the old king gave the order - arise and let us flee. Make speed to depart. For we must escape Absalom. This is the darkest and the most sorrowful day in the eventful life of David.

I call it a regretful day, for David, the King. The aged king walks forth from his palace upon Mt. Zion and all of his people with him. The members of his own household, the servants and officers of the Royal Court, the military captains. The counselors and heads of State, of each tribe. His body guards and the chosen 600 who had shared in the perils and wonderings of the king, before he came to the crown. Their wives and their children. The aged and the feeble all went forth from the city. On that long mournful procession on that regretful day.

Descended the steep sides of Mt. Zion - through the valley - up to the ridge of Moriah on the way which the temple was eventually built. They went down into the deep valley of (Kidron) I take it they were on foot and that the road that they traveled was steep and difficult. They carried some food in their hands.

And a few valuables and keepsakes.

At last, they are outside the city, and they cross the valley as David becomes a fugitive. It must have touched the father's heart deeply. As there was this group committed to him and to go forward as the head of the state. So David and Ittai moved on together to the front of the procession. And there was wailing and loud lamentation. As they stood side by side on the winding pathway, the broken-hearted monarch moving up through the valley wept with a loud voice. They climbed the Olivet and perhaps there were the priests and the levites who came with the ark of God. But David would not suffer that this be removed from the city. He did not want this to suffer the conflicts. If he was going to be de-throned and exiled, he did not wish to bring with him the tablets of stone. They would be lost with him.

15:25
Now some great men when they fall are ambitious. And they make ruin of every-
thing they can. They would have it appear in the world that the world cannot go
on without them. But everything sacred and precious depends upon them. Not so
with David. He said to the priest, carry back the ark of God unto the city. If
I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again. But if he says
I have no delight in Thee, behold, here am I. Let him do to me as seemeth good to
him.

The ark was carried back to the city. And the heart-broken king continued to
lead his group as they went to the wild mountain path and the loose pebbles. And
they went into the wilderness. God protects them and it was not taken from them.
They march on to the top of Olivet and by noon there was fearful reason for haste.
Absalom, who was on the march from Hebron, should arrive and cut off their retreat.
And so they could not pass the olive grove which had been the custom place for the
worship of God, to stop to pray for divine guidance.

After this, they begin the weary journey down the rocky road. This is the saddest day of his life. As he goes out and leaves the city.

III. REVENGEFUL SHIMEI

16:6-8

On this regretful day there was a man of revenge, a man of the house of Saul. Who came out upon the edge of one of those mountains as the king passed below and cast earth and stones upon the heads of the fugitives. Ran along on the heights - from rock to rock uttering the most violent and terrible curse upon David. One of the men of war begged David to permit him to cross over the glen and stop the mouth of that man of revenge. To take off his head. But David counted the insult a slight matter. Compared to the grief which he bore in his heart.

He only said, "let him alone." Let him curse. And what are his words. My son, my son, my only son of whom I could have died - seeketh my life. I Samuel 16:13-14

Shimei went on (cursing and casting stones) until he tired himself out and went back like a barking dog at travelers. Til he was tired of barking and his silence was brought because of the silence and the best treatment of a man's anger by a spiteful man who cursed. When he was tired of cursing and cooled of his anger, he maybe perhaps will reason but not before.

This was a weary day that passed slowly as the long line of fugitives traveled from the wild mountains down to the (hot plain of the Jordan) Toward the evening.

IV. THE RETREAT AT NIGHT

17:16

It is now deep into the night, and the company is weary, hungry, and faint.

And the small portion of goods that they had brought to eat was scarcely enough.

All lay down to sleep as best they could - without tents or covering, upon the level of hot sand bordering the river along the thickets and the oleander near the water's edge.

Midnight the alarm came that the forces of Absalom were at Jerusalem. And his spies were out in every direction, that the pursuit might be followed up any moment. The (only safety) for David now is to cross the Jordan before morning.

Therefore, they must retreat at night. And the fugitive king and his whole company of (broken exiles) were roused up from their first sleep. After a terrible exhausting day. And they renewed their toil and promptly before the dawn had lifted, the curtains of night, from the Mt. of Moab. The difficult and dangerous task of retreating across the swift river was accomplished. And now we come to the concluding section this evening on this night scene.

V. THE RELEVANT SEQUEL

This is the point in which we want to reach around and get ahold of some lessons from this night scene at the Jordan.

Results -

MĀ-hĀ-NĀ'im

First, David stopped at Mahanaim - that is the place where Jacob met the angelic host. As the name signifies while Absalom was gathering his forces, to come against the king. David was mustering a host - while Absalom was Godless and prayerless, David was penitent for his sins. Humble toward God and courageous toward men.

So this has something for us - at this night at the Jordan.

7:28-29 v. (28) One of the most touching things in connection with his stop here is the coming together from three different directions (three friends) to help David. Shōpi, Māchir, and Bārzillai - they brought beds and basins, and earthen ware, wheat and barley, meal, parched corn, beans, honey, butter, sheep, cheese, and David and his people that were with him had something to eat.

It is noticeable always however that a man of strong character will draw him friends whose friendship cannot be broken. David developed friendship so that people would come to him and stand-by him in every extremity.

So this is the first lesson that we see here.

We find that the (fullness of God to take care of every afflicted person.) Who is in need of divine favor? It is because he is a man, a living immortal soul, he cannot live satisfactorily or safely outside of God.

✓ The second relevant matter is we discover that God will deal with the enemies. Now this is a continuation of the story - David was calm with trust in God in the midst of all his troubles. At this terrible night at Jordan. But the harder the father is bound up with mis-givings because he has an affection for his wicked son. Now he is in exile in a city East of Jordan. And he stood at the gates of the city, broken with grief, and waiting for some light to come. And there is a fight that was taken place. And he knows that the fate of the kingdom of his life, depends upon the defeat of the rebellious son. The son has grown in ambition. And he is the worst man in the kingdom.

18:5

Now David kept charge saying to his chiefs - gently, gently for my sake

deal with the boy Absalom. On the other hand, the loyal followers of David were saying, Absalom had bad character and he is a dangerous man. But the father is carried away with his judgement and his parental affection. Absalom is the same dear boy that he thought of many many years ago when he was a little lad.

Now the warriors of Joab are very impatient. And they disappear in the oaks of Bashan. And this is David's last word as he still says gently, gently for my sake deal with my boy Absalom.

Now the day is far spent and the trumpet has been blown and the victory has been proclaimed and many thousands are now cold and dead on the bloody battle field. And King David sat in the gates of Mahain anxious - most of all for the safety of his son. The watchman on the tower stood above the gate looking down the winding hill. The sun was almost set. The man was coming out of the distant woods, running at full speed. The watchman on the tower said, if the man runs alone, he bringth tidings. Soon the panting messenger came. And with one word said peace, and fell down upon the earth and the king inquired about the army and the people. Is the young man Absalom safe? Now the first messenger gave an evasive answer. He said, I saw a great crowd. Now think of this - 20,000 men were dead on the sea. It is not long before the second young man came, and the question was put - is the young man Absalom safe? And when the death of the rebellious son was indicated by the second messenger, the king had not restrained himself any longer. He groaned and he shook. He went into a little chamber in the tower over the gate. Covered his face with his robe, and he walked to and fro pouring forth the bitterest cry of the anguish with the world has heard in 3,000 years. "Absalom, oh my son, my son, my son, Absalom - would God I had died for thee. Oh Absalom, my son, my son." This was the fearful climax of the sorrow of this trail at Jordan. There was no grief comparable to this. The sorrow of a loving father over his son. Not only is the sorrow of a loving father over a wicked son but it is over a son for whom there is no hope.

18:33

Because indeed, Absalom was a very wicked son. And this mighty man of war who had faith in God shows his love at the same time, and at all times among all people. He is the monarch. David was so utterly overwhelmed with his grief, that he did not think about going and following up the victory, and those rebels who followed Absalom.

Children forget their parents and leave their homes, and leave them comfortless in old age. Brothers and sisters become alienated. And they will not speak to each other. Friends are changed into enemies. Lovers are parted in hate. But it is against this deepest and mightiest principle of a parent to become indifferent about the welfare of his child. They have toiled, they have suffered, they wept, they prayed. They fixed their dearest hopes upon them.

✓ ✓
The third and final thing to say about this sequel is, to complete the story,
we turn to Psalm 3. For in your Bible it tells you that this Psalm was the Psalm of David - when he fled from Absalom, his son, and spent that night at the Jordan.

Ps. 3
It is at this point that we might gain some lessons. We might find encouragement for life. If you want help, and you need it, if you are discouraged tonight - and if you feel that you lack opportunity, or that you lack ability, you lack talent, then I would sight you to this passage of Scripture. Discouragement is one of the greatest sources of human wretchedness. Many unhappy people are there. They are restless, miserable, because they are discouraged. All the joy has gone out of their hearts and lives.

This is the thing that causes people to throw life away altogether. This is why people sometimes commit suicide. And you can look in their face and say why did you do this? Why did you throw your life away - the greatest treasure God

have ever given you. And they look back up at you and they say I have lost heart. I became utterly discouraged. I had many regretful days in my life.

Perhaps there are some tonight who are burdened and (feel that life) is useless. But I would challenge you, it is hard to do - to encourage a person. It is hard to convince a person of the victory that he needs when he is ill with fear and defeat. We only have to look at David here - how did he do it. How was he able to stand this awful night, at the Jordan.

Well, I could say several things about it. One thing I could say, I could tell you how he did not do it. He did not deny and ignore the difficult situation in which he found himself. He knew there were dangers and sorrows confronting him, and he did not say, well, I'll just look on the bright side. To just look beyond the disappointment and the discouragement, that would only bring despair. If we tune out the things that are discords and forget those things which are blessings. That will not help a 100%.

David did not find courage by thinking of his own goodness and his own greatness. He could have patted himself upon the back. And he could have said, well, I am a splendid fellow. God has appointed me for King in this country. Now, I have been living a righteous life since I have repented of my sins.

In the next place, David did not throw down his task and his responsibility. He merely wanted to get over on the side-line, and yet at the same time, trust in God for all of it. And perhaps, there are some of you tonight who are saying, well, I am just going to give up! I have made my mind up to quit! I have stumbled and I am going to hide myself away from the crowd and I am going to cease to strive or struggle - and I am going to give up. Some people do that on the church. They give up on God.

Now the sequel that is so relevant in this situation is just how did David go about finding the courage to go through this experience.

I Samuel 30:6 says, that he had a secret David encouraged himself in the Lord his God! He brought his difficulties, his sorrows, his failures and he layed them in the hand of the one that he knew could take care of them.

V. 1
First, he took note of the circumstances all about him. Psalm 3(1) Lord, how are they increased that trouble me. Many are they that rise up against me. Now there - he didn't say there was nothing wrong. Of course David could encourage himself you say. he was a great man, and a great poet and soldier. But he didn't know anything about sorrows like mine. Or the disappointments and discouragements that I have.

V. 2
David was not in an easy place - V. 2. "Many there be which say of my soul, there is no help for me in God." There are lots of people who come to that place. And he was face to face with a great failure. If the city of Jerusalem had been raided and captured and destroyed while he was there in that city, and he could have blamed it on God.

Maybe you have failed tonight. And you are depressed and out of heart. You have been defeated. And you have come perhaps to (God's House) with your mind made up that you will never try again. Perhaps you are listening to me tonight and you are saying in your heart, I just can't go on. Believe me, David said there are people who say there is no help, from God.

V. 3
In V(3) - He says, Lord you are my shield for me, you are my glory and the lifter up of mine head.

Relieve me tonight, that Jesus Christ has abundance of hope. He promises that though the cup may be bitter, he will help you to bear it. His disciples had failed him so miserably, and they should have watched. They slept when they should have prayed. And they had thrown away a big opportunity in the garden. And yet, Jesus did not throw away the opportunity - but he said instead, arise, let us be going. And they encouraged themselves in the Lord. And they found defeat turned to victory.

"
Each day is a new beginning. Each morn is the world made new.
Oh, you, who are weary of sinning
Here is a hope that is a chance for you.

Another thing, David was facing hatred and unpopularity. And lack of appreciation. Now yesterday everybody was applauding him. And yesterday men were complimenting him. They were offering him bouquets. Today, he is an unpopular man in the camp. No body seems to love him. No body seems to believe in him. No body seems to think that he is of very much value.

v. 4 - And so David is facing all of this. v. (4) - He said, I cried unto the Lord with my voice and he heard me out of his holy will.

Now, there maybe a stranger in this great city of ours. You have felt yourself utterly alone, forgotten, and maybe you are neglected. And maybe you have received a scorn from those who thought loved you best. And maybe you'd think that in a big crowd nobody cares, whether you go or come - live or die.

v. 5 - I layed me down and slept. I await - for the Lord sustained me.

What are you going to do about it. Are you going to lock yourself in with your sorrow and let that poison the fountain of your whole life. David could have done this. Jesus, our Lord, heals and sweetens our lives. Do you remember that the pathetic words that Jesus was unpopular, he was hated. The great crowd had deserted him. Only a few disciples clung to him. And he even said that the journey was coming to a close. And they would scatter and leave him alone.

How did Jesus come to say this. He would never have said it if he had not dreaded being alone. He hated loneliness. He hated it with a sensitiveness to which we are strangers. But he faced that loneliness without flinching. Why? Listen, he says, ye shall leave me alone and yet I am not alone - the Father is with me. And there may always be the conciliation for us. Whatever hatred, misunderstandings, unpopularity we may have to go through with. David said, "I lay down to sleep and the Lord sustained me. He sustained me.

Once again, David faces personal danger. Death was opening the latch on his door. And the people out yonder who once idolized him were not threatening to stone him. But what did he do when he stood eye to eye with danger.

V. 6 "V. 6 - I will not be afraid of 10,000 people. That have set themselves against me round about.

I thank God that a sure refuge is open to every one of us. Countless multitudes of God's saints, can become calm and unafraid tonight. David Livingston tells us one night sleeping in Africa, he heard the wild screams of savages that sought him. The instinct was self preservation. So he arose and broke into a wild run into the dark. And he had run only a few steps when he arrested from a blessed promise from God's word. And he tells us that he went back and layed down knowing that he - it was the word of a perfect gentlemen. He encouraged himself in the Lord, His God. And he knew that he would not be harmed. David said this, though 10,000 people

have come against me - around about me.

Listen to the Apostle Paul as he stands on the ship 14 days in the tempest - going to pieces. The storm rages. Hunger has come. They have not eaten for days and nights. And he cries, be of good cheer. "What is the secret of this cheer. Listen. There stood by me, this night, the angel of God. Whose I am, and whom I serve, saying fear not Paul. In the midst of this awful peril, Paul was encouraged in the Lord.

Are you confronted tonight by dangers. That you are powerless and helpless. Are you panic stricken, in the presence of the demands made upon you.

David also faced personal loss. His loved ones had been into the city, and now even his rebellious son had been killed.

V. 7
V. 7 - He says, I will arise. Oh Lord, save me. For thou hast smitten all of mine enemies upon the cheekbone - thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord. "Thy blessing is upon thy people. So this tells us that there are many here tonight who have suffered loss. And when I speak of that, we might turn to the widely scattered graves - some of them maybe just new and fresh. Others may be older and the grass has grown upon them. But we have not forgotten and we can never forget. What will we do in the presence of this grim fact of death. The little baby and tottled right out of your arms, right out of your home on that sad day. The high chair, no one sits in it. The toys, no one plays with them. What will you do about it. You may do this if you will - you may come as David. Arise oh Lord.

*Feel like getting away - Putting down the burden - Hide yourself -
All you need is here - God is near -*