

- Rundown of Events
 - I. Amnon Rapes and Rejects Tamar (2 Sam 13:1-22)
 - II. Absalom Murders Amnon (2 Sam 13: 23-29)
 - III. Absalom Flees (2 Sam 13:34-39)
 - IV. Joab convinces David to invite Absalom back to Jerusalem
 - V. David finally sees and kisses Abs after he's been back 2 years
 - VI. The conspiracy begins (2 Sam 15:1-6)
 - VII. Absalom stages a feast and proclaims himself king at Hebron – all Israel is for him
 - VIII. David Flees Jerusalem with all but 10 of his people...
 - IX. Ahithophel's Advice (father of Eliam, grandpa of Bathsheba) (2 Sam 16:20-23)
 - X. Hushai frustrates Ahith's advice – Ahithophel kills himself
 - XI. Absalom is killed
 - XII. David's Grief (2 Sam 18:33)

What do you do when you or someone you love is the victim?

I. Deal Honestly With God (Psalm 3)

- **God's Anger.** Anger is not sin, but rather, is rooted in concern for two things – concern for justice (i.e. what is right) and concern for the person. If God were to see the sinful ways that people treat Him and each other and NOT become angry, I do not see how we could say He is loving. Saying that God is patient is by definition saying that he has anger, because if your patience never runs out, you can't really be loving. Loving people understand that remaining calm forever means at some point not loving enough to get angry and say, "That's enough!" The secret of God's anger is CONCERN. He actually cares about people, and that's why He gets angry. But he's slow to anger.
- **Our Anger.** We are made in his image. Therefore we ought not assume that anger is inherently sinful. It is the appropriate response to injustice. But anger is very powerful. "*In your anger, do not sin.*" And "*Do not let the sun go down on your anger.*" [Eph 4:26] Anger is meant to move us to seek justice. It isn't meant to be held – it's meant to be dealt with and put away. And sometimes we can be overcome by anger and it can stay and fester and become not a response to sin, but a posture of our soul in an unhealthy way.
- **What do we make of imprecatory prayers?** "God, break their teeth! God fight them for me!" Are we the weak little brother running home to the big brother and having him beat up the guys who stole our lunch money? Interestingly – we see David pray similar prayers when Saul is after him, but when he's face to face with Saul he extends mercy. So he prays anger but extends mercy? Not always – sadly. But he does that with both Saul and Absalom – which is telling. I think imprecatory prayers are less about endorsing revenge and more about authentic excavation of the pain before God. Some of us would never pray this way, and really it's because we don't admit just how angry we are. We think we love everybody, and we haven't

yet actually discovered what lies beneath the surface of our hearts. If we don't learn to excavate our pain before God – to really mine the hurt and wrong and then to lift up that broken soul to God – if we don't learn to do it, I don't know how we're ever going to move to biblical forgiveness. We may offer fake forgiveness – mouth the words and force the smiles. But that's Absalom-style forgiveness. Plotting. Smooth. Manipulative. Not David styled forgiveness. Turbulent. Unsightly. But authentic.

- **No turbulence?** A prayer life that is never turbulent is probably a sign of a heart that isn't being vulnerable and authentic before God.
- **Mining the Pain.** Excavating the wound. We're meant to walk through it. It's a journey. But failure to take the journey stuffs that pain down. I've seen repressed anger come out in people's health immediately dropping. Joint pain, TMJ, loss of sleep...they used to say that depression is anger turned inward. Not always true, but sometimes it is.

II. Forgive (Matthew 6:12,14-15)

- **Who are my enemies?** Well, who can really hurt us. Some can hurt the body, others can break the heart. Philistines could never have been enemies to David in the way that Saul was. In the way that Absalom was. Because David loved Saul and Absalom. Most likely, your enemies are those closest to you. Close friends. Family. Parents. Children. Husband. Wife. Sister. Brother. Most likely. These are the people who can really inflict a wound. So don't think that when Jesus tells you to love your enemies that you don't have any. Don't minimize your situation because no blood was drawn by foreign soldiers. Let me ask you, "Have you ever been wronged?" "Who hurt you?" *Most often* the enemy Jesus calls us to forgive and to love is someone close to us.
- **Dorothy Chupp.** Not forgiving someone is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.
- **Biblical Forgiveness.** Every act of forgiveness first condemns the sin. Forgiveness first condemns the sin as blameworthy and deserving punishment. It isn't sweeping it under the rug. It isn't just acting like it didn't happen because "I cannot lose this person." It is not being a doormat and always being mistreated. It condemns the sin as blameworthy and deserving punishment. That's the first part. The second part is this: Biblical forgiveness surrenders the right to punish to God.
- **Giving up the right to punish is rooted in a dual conviction.**
 - #1 - **A day of reckoning** is coming when God will deal with each one.
 - #2 - And it is rooted in the conviction that I have received mercy from God, therefore **I live by mercy, not by justice**. For if I lived by justice, I would perish. And since I live by mercy, I must extend it also, and not merely receive it. "Forgive as God in Christ forgave you." (**Eph 4:32, Col 3:13**) Remember the parable of the unforgiving servant (**Matt 18:21-35**)!
- **The real question in forgiveness** – "Will the Lord really fight for me? Or am I on my own in this life?" Absalom did his own fighting. David somehow managed to believe that God was merciful and would even take up his cause. Jason Upton – "I'm rejoicing in the fact that the Bible says

that you are my Victorious Warrior. You're the one who fights for me! I don't have to fight anymore. I don't have to fight this loneliness any more. Though friends have failed me. Though loved ones have failed me. Though doubts assail me. I'm letting go. I'm believing in the word that you said. My faith is rising..."

- **Peter tells us** not to suffer for wrongdoing, but to suffer in innocence, as Christ did as our example (1 Peter 1:19-21). Being an emotional counter-punching drama queen is doing just that. You may not have started it, but you become the problem because you don't forgive. And going back to last week – this is a heart issue, not a rule-breaking issue.

III. Confront the Wrongdoer (Matthew 18:15-17)

Matthew 18:15-17 ¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

- **What is God's intent in this?** It is the restoration of the sinner to fellowship with God and to fellowship with the community. It is not punitive. It is redemptive. If your motive in confronting is punitive, you're not ready yet. Galatians 6:1 says that when we seek to confront someone we must do it gently. If you cannot do it with the right motive and attitude, you are not yet ready.
- **This is sadly lacking in the story.** David does not appear to confront Amnon. And he does not confront Absalom. Absalom does the very same thing. And it lets the sin fester and spread in the heart and in the family.

IV. Conclusion

- So three things
 - I. Deal Honestly with God
 - II. Forgive
 - III. Confront
- **Absalom's legacy is unforgiveness. What will yours be?**
- "Lord, show me the hurt in my heart that needs healing. Show me the face of the person you want me to forgive."