

## **Bible Readings**

### **2 Samuel 14**

#### **Absalom Returns to Jerusalem**

**14** Joab son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart longed for Absalom. <sup>2</sup> So Joab sent someone to Tekoa and had a wise woman brought from there. He said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning. Dress in mourning clothes, and don't use any cosmetic lotions. Act like a woman who has spent many days grieving for the dead. <sup>3</sup> Then go to the king and speak these words to him." And Joab put the words in her mouth.

<sup>4</sup> When the woman from Tekoa went to the king, she fell with her face to the ground to pay him honour, and she said, "Help me, Your Majesty!"

<sup>5</sup> The king asked her, "What is troubling you?"

She said, "I am a widow; my husband is dead. <sup>6</sup> I your servant had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him. <sup>7</sup> Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant; they say, 'Hand over the one who struck his brother down, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed; then we will get rid of the heir as well.' They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth."

<sup>8</sup> The king said to the woman, "Go home, and I will issue an order in your behalf."

<sup>9</sup> But the woman from Tekoa said to him, "Let my lord the king pardon me and my family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt."

<sup>10</sup> The king replied, "If anyone says anything to you, bring them to me, and they will not bother you again."

<sup>11</sup> She said, "Then let the king invoke the LORD his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction, so that my son will not be destroyed."

"As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "not one hair of your son's head will fall to the ground."

<sup>12</sup> Then the woman said, "Let your servant speak a word to my lord the king."

"Speak," he replied.

<sup>13</sup> The woman said, "Why then have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? When the king says this, does he not convict himself, for the king has not brought back his banished son? <sup>14</sup> Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But that is not what God desires; rather, he devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him.

<sup>15</sup> "And now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; perhaps he will grant his servant's request. <sup>16</sup> Perhaps the king will agree to deliver his servant from the hand of the man who is trying to cut off both me and my son from God's inheritance.'

<sup>17</sup> "And now your servant says, 'May the word of my lord the king secure my inheritance, for my lord the king is like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. May the LORD your God be with you.'"

<sup>18</sup> Then the king said to the woman, "Don't keep from me the answer to what I am going to ask you."

"Let my lord the king speak," the woman said.

<sup>19</sup> The king asked, "Isn't the hand of Joab with you in all this?"

The woman answered, "As surely as you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything my lord the king says. Yes, it was your servant Joab who instructed me to do this and who put all these words into the mouth of your servant. <sup>20</sup> Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God—he knows everything that happens in the land."

<sup>21</sup> The king said to Joab, "Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom."

<sup>22</sup> Joab fell with his face to the ground to pay him honour, and he blessed the king. Joab said, "Today your servant knows that he has found favour in your eyes, my lord the king, because the king has granted his servant's request."

<sup>23</sup> Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. <sup>24</sup> But the king said, "He must go to his own house; he must not see my face." So, Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king.

<sup>25</sup> In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him. <sup>26</sup> Whenever he cut the hair of his head—he used to cut his hair once a year because it became too heavy for him—he would weigh it, and its weight was two hundred shekels by the royal standard.

<sup>27</sup> Three sons and a daughter were born to Absalom. His daughter's name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.

<sup>28</sup> Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face. <sup>29</sup> Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come to him. So, he sent a second time, but he refused to come. <sup>30</sup> Then he said to his servants, "Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire." So, Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

<sup>31</sup> Then Joab did go to Absalom's house, and he said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

<sup>32</sup> Absalom said to Joab, "Look, I sent word to you and said, 'Come here so I can send you to the king to ask, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there!"' Now then, I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death."

<sup>33</sup> So Joab went to the king and told him this. Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

### **NT Reading – Luke 15:11-32**

#### **The Parable of the Lost Son**

<sup>11</sup> Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So, he divided his property between them.

<sup>13</sup> "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. <sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! <sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' <sup>20</sup> So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

<sup>21</sup> "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

<sup>22</sup> "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So, they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup> "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup> 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

**28** "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So, his father went out and pleaded with him. **29** But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' **31** "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. **32** But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

## Sermon

**God devises a way to bring us back (2 Sam 14:1-33 and Luke 15:11-32)**

**04-Oct-20**

It would be great to have your **Bibles open** at 2 Samuel chapter 14.

As we continue this amazing story of King David's life.

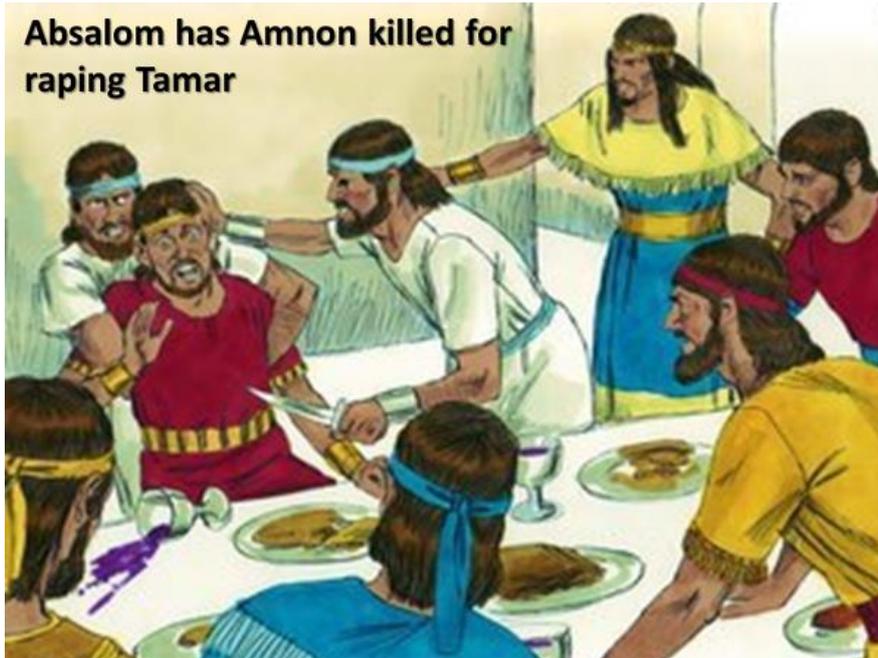
Let me **pray** before we begin...

Let's pray...

## Recap/Context

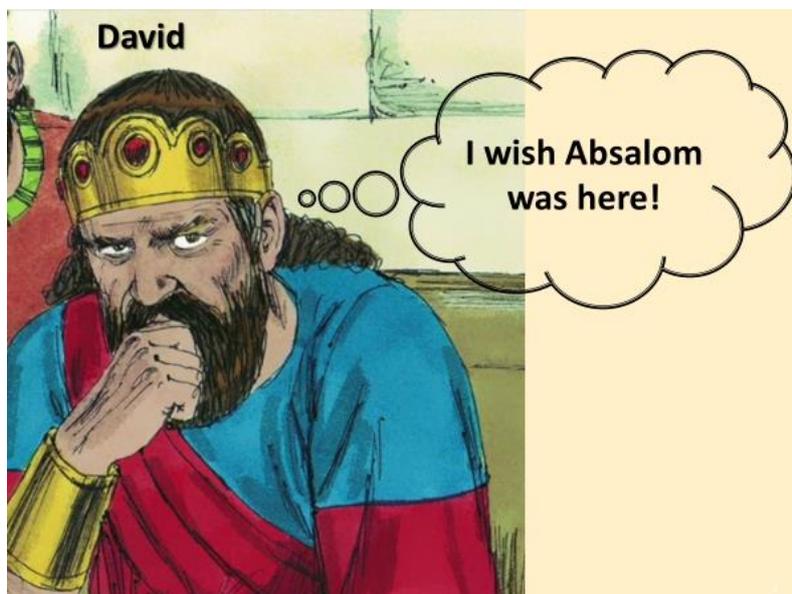
- Last week we had the tragic story of the **rape of David's daughter, Tamar, by her half-brother Amnon**
- **David** didn't do anything about this - he didn't reprimand Amnon

[PowerPoint 1-Amnon killed]



- So, Tamar's brother, **Absalom**, took matters into his own hands and had **Amnon killed**
- As **David grieved** for his son, **Amnon** - **Absalom fled** the scene knowing he had done the wrong thing by taking **revenge** - whereas the Bible says - **revenge is up to God** (Deut 32:35)- not us

[PowerPoint 2-David misses Absalom]



- And we finished up **last week** with the last verse of chapter 13 where it says *David longed to go to his son Absalom*
- Despite Absalom's grave sin, in murdering his brother Amnon, David still loves Absalom and longs to see him.

## Intro

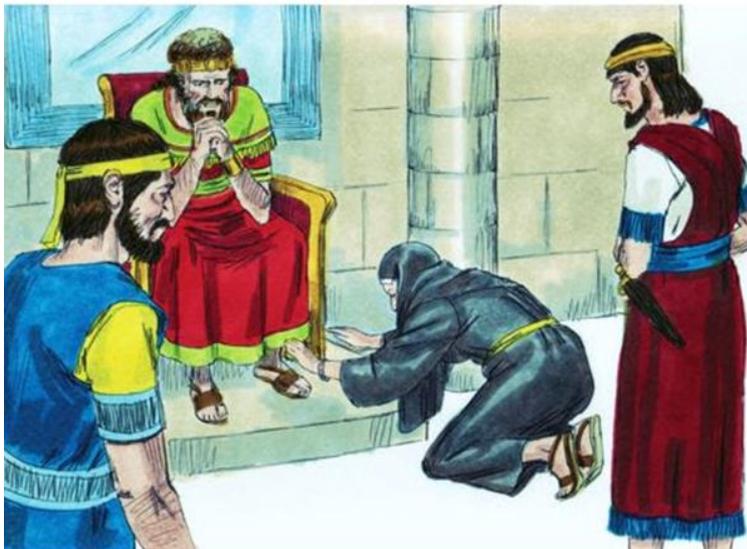
- As a parent we don't always love our **child's behaviour** - but we still love our **child**
- You may have been in the situation where one of your **children** wasn't **talking to you** - or doesn't **want to see you** - or they've **moved away** and they **don't keep in touch?**
- **Heather and I** had exactly that situation a few years ago - when **one of our children** **didn't talk to us for 2 years** - it's was **terrible** - praise God it's all good now
- You may have been in a situation where there is a **conflict** with a **family member or close friend** - and there doesn't seem to be a solution?
- It's a horrible feeling **when there is an unresolved conflict** - it **hurts** like **crazy** - you love the person - but reconciliation doesn't seem likely  
(pause)
- That's pretty much how **King David** is **feeling right now**
- **David** **longs to see Absalom** but **Absalom** has run away
- **David** doesn't seem to know whether to **make the first move** - or wait for **Absalom** to **make a move?**

- We pick up today's passage **2 Sam 14**
- Let's see how God works

### Joab has a plan to reconcile David and Absalom (2 Sam 14:1-3)

- Look at vv1-3
- **Joab** - David's nephew - and the commander of David's army
- **Realizes** how much **David** is **hurting over** Absalom
- Sometimes those closest to us - can know how we're feeling without us having to say anything
- **Joab** also **realizes** it's not a good idea for **Absalom** to be left in exile - stewing and **perhaps plotting** something else - it's much better if **David** and **Absalom** are **reconciled** - for David's sake - and for Israel's sake
- So, **Joab** comes up with a **plan** - he hires a **wise woman** from **Tekoa** (a town 16km south of Jerusalem) to go to David with a **parable**

[PowerPoint 3-widows parable]



### The Widow of Tekoa's parable (2 Sam 14:4-20)

- Remember we said a couple of weeks ago

- A **parable** is a **simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson**
- The woman's **parable goes like this:**
  - She is a **widow** with **2 sons**
  - They had a **fight in a field**
  - One killed the other
  - The rest of the **family want her to hand over her son** who murdered his brother - and **have him put to death**
  - If she does that - she will **lose both sons** - and have no heir
  - What a **dilemma**
- King **David** is moved by the parable
- And says he will **issue an order** that no harm comes to **her remaining son**
- It's interesting that **David** is able to pardon the **widow's murdering son** - but not his own murdering son - for the sake of the country
- **David** has no idea the story is a parable about him and his sons Amnon and Absalom
- The **woman hits David** in the **heart** when she explains that the parable is really about him - and that **he has not brought back his banished son, Absalom** - and reconciled to him - and that this is damaging Israel
- Then she says something amazing in v14
- The key verse I reckon

[PowerPoint 4-2 Samuel 14:14]

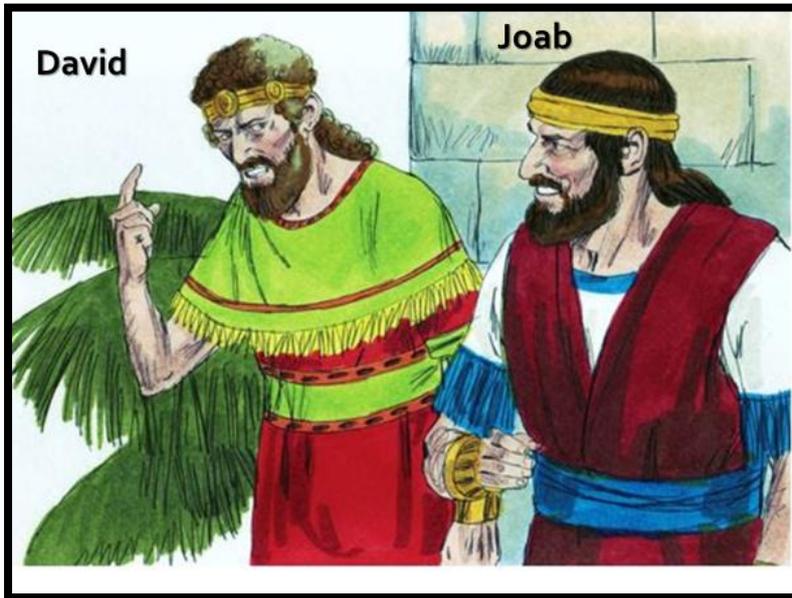
*But that is not what God desires [that people should remain banished from Him]; rather, He devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from Him.*

- You see - through Joab and the widow - **God has devised a way for the banished person, Absalom, to return to his father**
- **David realizes that Joab is behind the widow's parable**
- **Joab knew which strings to pull and which buttons to press - to get David to act**
- With any **parable** - it's **designed to make us think - who are we like in the parable?**
- Are we like Joab and the widow - **trying to bring about reconciliation?**
- Are we like David - **not sure** how to approach **reconciliation?**
- Are we like Absalom - we're **out in the cold** - not sure if we're welcome back - not sure how to **make things right?**
- **Whichever** person we're most like in the story - remember the widow's words from v14- *God devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him.*
- Please **don't ignore those opportunities as David and Absalom do** - as we'll see...

## Absalom returns to Jerusalem but not to David (2 Sam 14:21-27)

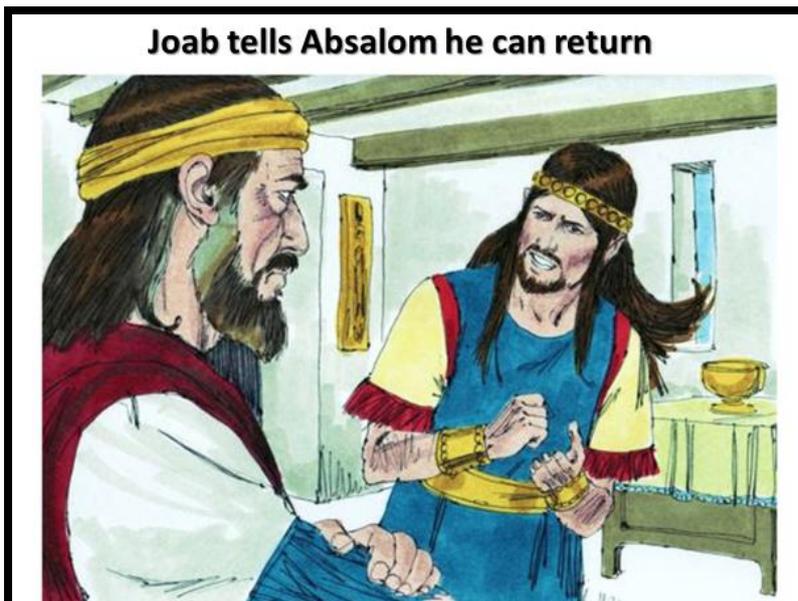
### [PowerPoint 5-David & Joab]

- Once David knows Joab is behind the parable



- He **agrees** for Joab to bring Absalom back - v21
- BUT
- David is stubborn and too harsh here

### [PowerPoint 6-Absalom can return]



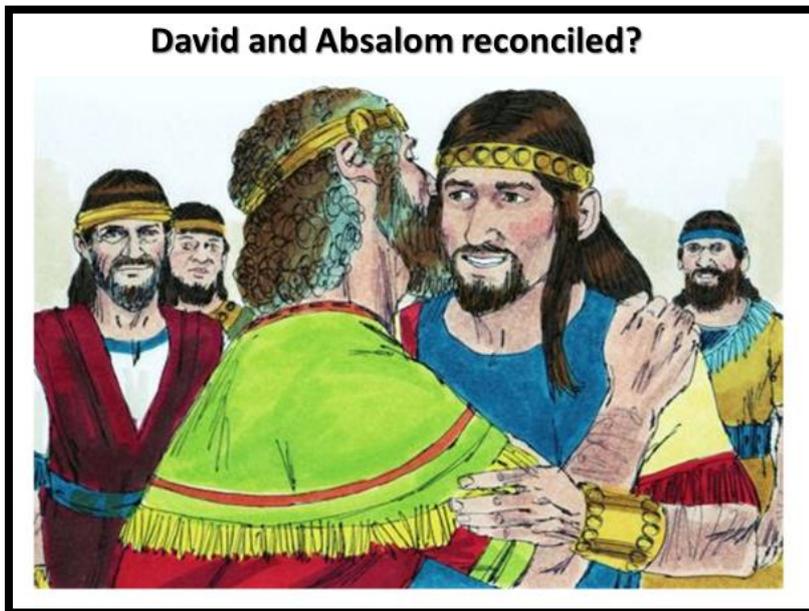
- See v24 - David says **Absalom must go to his own house** and not see David's face
- What sort of reconciliation is that?
- Is that how God wants us to reconcile with one another?
  
- We're then given some **personal details** about **Absalom**
  - He's the most **highly praised man** in Israel because he's so handsome
  - **Not a blemish** on him from head to toe
  - He has **beautiful long hair** which he only **cuts once a year** (weighed **5lbs 2.3kg**)
  - He has **3 sons** and one **daughter** - a daughter named **Tamar** - as a **memorial** to his sister, Tamar, who was raped.
- We're told these **personal details** to show why Absalom gains such **popularity** in Israel - as we'll see in the coming weeks

### Absalom comes to David (2 Sam 14:28-33)

- **Absalom lived 2 years** in **Jerusalem** after his return - v28 - and still hadn't seen his father, David
- Finally, **Absalom makes a move** to see his father and **sends for Joab** to **organize a visit** to the King.
- **Joab ignores Absalom** twice
- Not a good idea to **ignore Absalom**
- So, Absalom's **came up with a way** to **get Joab's attention**
- By **setting fire** to **Joab's barley field**

- That got Joab's attention - and he arranged for Absalom to visit David

[PowerPoint 7-David & Absalom reconciled?]



- Although David receives Absalom
- There is no repentance from Absalom
- And there's no comment from David about Absalom's behaviour
- Is that what God would want?
- As we learnt - back in v14 - it says *God devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him.*
- **God devised a way** for Absalom to return from exile and to come to David - but neither David nor Absalom do anything about this

### Proper reconciliation (Luke 15:11-32)

In our NT story from **Luke 15:11-32** - we hear another parable about another father and son - where there is **proper reconciliation**

[PowerPoint 8-Prodigal]

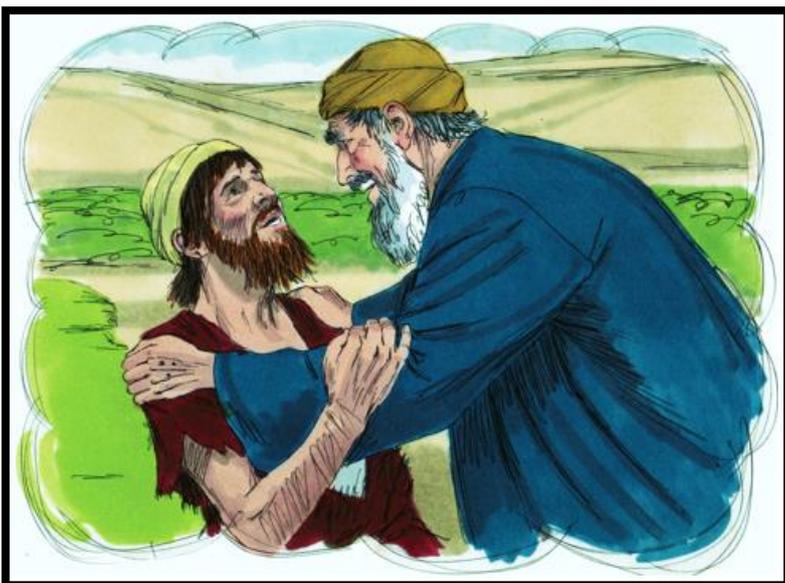


The parable tells of a father with two sons and one of the sons is greedy and wants his inheritance from his father - whilst the father is alive - basically he wishes his father was dead so he can get his hands on his money

The father agrees and divides his money between the two sons and the greedy son goes off and wastes the lot (hence the prodigal son = recklessly wasteful)

The son finally comes to his senses and realizes his sin

[PowerPoint 9-son returns]



He returns to the father with genuine repentance and heartfelt sorrow

He's so sorry - he's **willing** to be just one of his **father's servants**

The **father** is **overjoyed** and **forgives** his **son** who was lost from him?

How do this father and son - **compare to David and Absalom?**

Is David forgiving like the **father** in our NT story? No!

Is Absalom repentant like the **prodigal son**? No!

In this NT parable

**God** **devises** a way for the **lost son** to come home

But when he comes home, he is repentant - **not so**, **Absalom** - he doesn't come home repentant - he **comes home** burning Joab's fields!

In the NT parable there is **proper reconciliation**

But in the story of David and Absalom the **reconciliation** is **superficial** and for **show only**.

What about us?

**God** **devises** a way for us to come back to Him

The NT parable also relates to us

We are like the prodigal lost son - **lost from God** because of our sins - **God** wants us to come to our senses and realize our sin -

In fact, like Absalom - **we're responsible for the death of someone too** - - because our sins caused Jesus' death too.

But - **God** is the **loving father** in the parable who **accepts us back**

And **God** **makes the first move** in this reconciliation

God does this through His son - that's the way God devised to bring us back from being banished/lost from him because of our sin

He sent Jesus to bring about that reconciliation

Jesus has done all the hard work

He's suffered, he's been falsely accused, he's died a cruel death on a cross - and taken our sins off us; He's taken our punishment and He's taken our death - and He offers reconciliation - and He offers forgiveness and eternal life

But we do have to do something - we can't sit on our hands like David and Absalom did - we have to do something in response to all the hard work Jesus did

[PowerPoint 10-ABC]

It's as simple as A B C

A - Admit our sin - genuine heartfelt repentance - like the prodigal son - not like Absalom

B - Believe Jesus has died for our sins to be forgiven and believe he rose so we can have eternal life

C - Confess that Jesus is Lord of our lives - that means having a personal relationship with Him and being fully reconciled to God - and following His way from now on...

Maybe you're someone here or listening online - who hasn't made that simple ABC yet - today would be a good day to do it

## Conclusion/Challenge

To **finish up** then I'd like to throw out a **couple of challenges**

Because God has **devised** a way for us to be **brought back to Him** through the **forgiveness** given to us through **Jesus'** death

I'd like to **challenge us to**

a. 1<sup>st</sup> - **Share** that **good news of forgiveness** - through **Jesus** - with **others** -

as Matt 28:18-20 says:

[PowerPoint 11-Matt 28]

*<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Is there someone we could share this good news with so they are reconciled to God? But we're sitting on our hands and **not doing it?**

b. 2<sup>nd</sup> - We **must forgive others** like we have been forgiven - as Matt 6:14-

15 puts it:

[PowerPoint 12-Forgive]

*<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

We must forgive - and **encourage others** to be **reconciled to God** and to **each other**

Is there someone we need to reconcile with?

And **we've been putting it off** like David and Absalom did? Perhaps God is **setting fire to our barley field** to get our attention - sometimes **God** **allows a trial** or two to **get our attention** - because He knows we won't act otherwise?

Is there a situation we know of where **two people are at loggerheads** and **we could help bring about that reconciliation?**

Pray about it!

**Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God** (Matt 5:9)

Let's pray...