

Bible Readings

Old Testament Reading

2 Samuel 18:19-19:43

David Mourns

¹⁹ Now Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "Let me run and take the news to the king that the LORD has vindicated him by delivering him from the hand of his enemies."

²⁰ "You are not the one to take the news today," Joab told him. "You may take the news another time, but you must not do so today, because the king's son is dead."

²¹ Then Joab said to a Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed down before Joab and ran off.

²² Ahimaaz son of Zadok again said to Joab, "Come what may, please let me run behind the Cushite."

But Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to go? You don't have any news that will bring you a reward."

²³ He said, "Come what may, I want to run."

So, Joab said, "Run!" Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite.

²⁴ While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates, the watchman went up to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked out, he saw a man running alone. ²⁵ The watchman called out to the king and reported it.

The king said, "If he is alone, he must have good news." And the runner came closer and closer.

²⁶ Then the watchman saw another runner, and he called down to the gatekeeper, "Look, another man running alone!"

The king said, "He must be bringing good news, too."

27 The watchman said, "It seems to me that the first one runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok."

"He's a good man," the king said. "He comes with good news."

28 Then Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well!" He bowed down before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise be to the LORD your God! He has delivered up those who lifted their hands against my lord the king."

29 The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

Ahimaaz answered, "I saw great confusion just as Joab was about to send the king's servant and me, your servant, but I don't know what it was."

30 The king said, "Stand aside and wait here." So, he stepped aside and stood there.

31 Then the Cushite arrived and said, "My lord the king, hear the good news! The LORD has vindicated you today by delivering you from the hand of all who rose up against you."

32 The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

The Cushite replied, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man."

33 The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!"

19 Joab was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." ² And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, "The king is grieving for his son." ³ The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. ⁴ The king covered his face and cried aloud, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

⁵ Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. ⁶ You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. ⁷ Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the LORD that if you don't go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come on you from your youth till now."

⁸ So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway," they all came before him. Meanwhile, the Israelites had fled to their homes.

David Returns to Jerusalem

⁹ Throughout the tribes of Israel, all the people were arguing among themselves, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies; he is the one who rescued us from the hand of the Philistines. But now he has fled the country to escape from Absalom; ¹⁰ and Absalom, whom we anointed to rule over us, has died in battle. So why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?"

¹¹ King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests: "Ask the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his palace, since what is being said throughout Israel has reached the king at his quarters? ¹² You are my relatives, my own flesh and blood. So why should you be the last to bring back the king?' ¹³ And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my own flesh and blood? May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you are not the commander of my army for life in place of Joab.'"

¹⁴ He won over the hearts of the men of Judah so that they were all of one mind. They sent word to the king, "Return, you and all your men." ¹⁵ Then the king returned and went as far as the Jordan. Now the men of Judah had come to Gilgal to go out and meet the king and bring him across the Jordan. ¹⁶ Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet King David. ¹⁷ With him were a thousand Benjamites, along with Ziba, the steward of Saul's household, and his fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed to the Jordan, where the king was. ¹⁸ They crossed at the ford to take the king's household over and to do whatever he wished. When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell prostrate before the king ¹⁹ and said to him, "May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. ²⁰ For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first from the tribes of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king."

²¹ Then Abishai son of Zeruah said, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this? He cursed the LORD's anointed."

²² David replied, "What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruah? What right do you have to interfere? Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Don't I know that today I am king over Israel?" ²³ So the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king promised him on oath.

²⁴ Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his moustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. ²⁵ When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?"

²⁶ He said, "My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, 'I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.' But Ziba my servant betrayed me. ²⁷ And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God; so do whatever you wish. ²⁸ All my grandfather's descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who eat at your table. So, what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?"

²⁹ The king said to him, "Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the land."

³⁰ Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has returned home safely."

³¹ Barzillai the Gileadite also came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan with the king and to send him on his way from there. ³² Now Barzillai was very old, eighty years of age. He had provided for the king during his stay in Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. ³³ The king said to Barzillai, "Cross over with me and stay with me in Jerusalem, and I will provide for you."

³⁴ But Barzillai answered the king, "How many more years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? ³⁵ I am now eighty years old. Can I tell the difference between what is enjoyable and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats and drinks? Can I still hear the voices of male and female singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? ³⁶ Your servant will cross over the Jordan with the king for a short distance, but why should the king reward me in this way? ³⁷ Let your servant return, that I may die in my own town near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever you wish."

³⁸ The king said, "Kimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him whatever you wish. And anything you desire from me I will do for you."

³⁹ So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed over. The king kissed Barzillai and bid him farewell, and Barzillai returned to his home.

⁴⁰ When the king crossed over to Gilgal, Kimham crossed with him. All the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel had taken the king over.

⁴¹ Soon all the men of Israel were coming to the king and saying to him, "Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, steal the king away and bring him and his household across the Jordan, together with all his men?"

⁴² All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "We did this because the king is closely related to us. Why are you angry about it? Have we eaten any of the king's provisions? Have we taken anything for ourselves?"

⁴³ Then the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king; so we have a greater claim on David than you have. Why then do you treat us with contempt? Weren't we the first to speak of bringing back our king?"

But the men of Judah pressed their claims even more forcefully than the men of Israel.

New Testament Reading

John 11:45-53

The Plot to Kill Jesus

⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

“What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

⁴⁹ Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵² and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. ⁵³ So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

Sermon

If only I had died instead of you (2 Sam 18:19-19:43 & John 11:45-53)

25-Oct-20

Please have your **Bibles turned to 2 Samuel 18 - starting at verse 19**

There's an **outline** - if you want to take **notes**.

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

Let's pray...

Intro

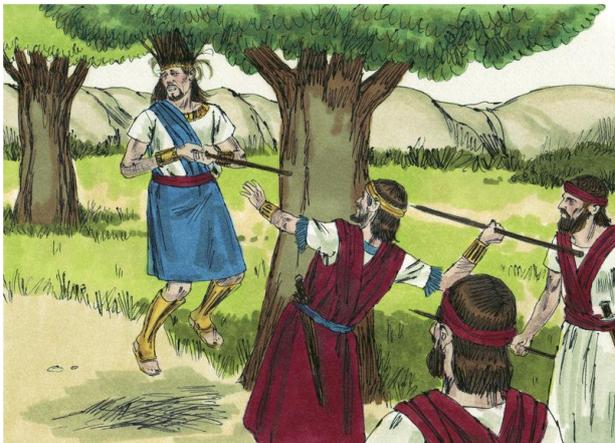
- Back in **2005** when I was **diagnosed** with a very aggressive cancer
- **Heather** and the **children** were **faced** with the very real possibility that I might die

- At the time, my **Mum, was still alive**
- To her - it seemed **unthinkable** that I could possibly **die before her**
- Normally parents don't outlive their children
- I can remember her sitting on the **front porch** one day - in her thick Irish accent - saying to me "*It's not right, Paul, it should be me - not you - it's just not right, Paul - if only it were me instead of you*"

Context

- We finished up **last week** where David's son, **Absalom**, had **rebelled against** his father, King **David**, and convinced most of **Israel** to **back him** - instead of David
- But his rebellion came to a **sticky end!**

[PowerPoint 1-Absalom/Tree]



- Absalom was **riding a donkey** under an oak tree - and his **beautiful long hair** - got **tangled up in the branches** of the tree - and Absalom was left **hanging in mid-air**
- **Joab** - the **commander** of David's army - wasted no time - in **finishing Absalom off**

- Which brings us to **today's passage** - from 2 Sam 18:19-19:43
- Who is going to **inform King David** - of the **death of his son, Absalom?**

David learns of Absalom's death (2 Samuel 18:19-32)

- See v19 of chapter 18
- **Ahimaaz** - son of Zadok - the **priest** - **volunteers** to run and take the news to the King - that the **Lord has delivered David** from the hand of his enemies
- It's a **tricky one**
- Is the news - **good news or bad news?**
- **Absalom's death** means the **rebellion is over** and **David** can **keep his kingdom** - and the one against David is gone - that's good news - **right?**
- But Absalom is David's son - and **David loves him so much** - despite Absalom's rebellion - but now Absalom is dead. From a father's point of view - **losing a son is tragic** - and that's bad news
- **Ahimaaz is confident the news is good**
- But Joab knows that David is more interested in Absalom's welfare - **than** the **outcome of the battle**
- So, **Joab** doesn't want Ahimaaz to go
- The last time someone told David - **about the death of someone** (Saul) - it **didn't go well** for the messenger - at all (2 Samuel 1)
- **Joab chooses** to send a **foreign soldier** to tell David the bad news of Absalom's death
- The foreign soldier is a **Cushite** - Cush being associated with **Ethiopia**
- So, we have this **bizarre situation** where we have **two messengers** running to tell David the news - both **Ahimaaz** (who insists on going) and the **Cushite**

[PowerPoint 2-David sees messengers]



- David is sitting at the gates of the city
- Ahimaaz outruns the Cushite
- When David heard from the watchman that Ahimaaz had come running on his own - David assumed it was good news
- When David heard that another runner was coming alone - again David assumed it was good news
- This is just wishful thinking on David's part
- Ahimaaz starts to deliver the message to David - that the Lord has delivered up those who lifted their hands against David, the King
- But when David asks 'is the young man Absalom safe?'
- Ahimaaz can't bring himself to say what happened to Absalom
- Ahimaaz is a good runner but a terrible messenger
- The other runner - the Cushite - has no qualms in delivering the news to David - when David asks the same question to the Cushite - 'is the young man Absalom safe?'
- The Cushite says - May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man.

- Small Application here for us - when delivering news like this - we need to be pastorally sensitive - and speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15)

David's Grief for Absalom (2 Samuel 18:33; John 11:45-53)

- Understandably David's grief for Absalom is immense
- See v33 - the key verse for me!

[PowerPoint 3-2 Sam 18:33]

The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said:
 "O my son Absalom!
 My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you -
 O Absalom, my son, my son!"
 II Samuel 18:33

- David is physically shaken by the news of his son's death
- Sometimes when people receive such news
- They are physically affected - not just emotionally affected
- And David's words here are telling
- O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you - O Absalom, my son, my son!
- What loving words from a father to his son - "if only I had died instead of you" [like my mum said to me]
- It should remind us of someone else though
- In our NT passage reading from John 11

- **Jesus** has just raised **Lazarus** from the dead
- The **chief priests and Pharisees** were really concerned now about **Jesus'** popularity - and his popularity was **starting to threaten** their own status and position
- So, the High Priest at the time - **Caiaphas** - addresses the Jewish Council - and says (John 11:50) - **it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish**
- **Caiaphas** was saying this for political and nationalistic reasons
- Not realizing that this was in fact **God's plan**

[PowerPoint 4-Cross]

- God's Plan was - that it was **better for one God/man - Jesus** - to die - so that people can be saved from perishing for their sins
- Just like David would have been willing to die instead of his son, Absalom
- In a far greater way, **Jesus was willing to die** instead of us - so we could go free from the punishment of our sins
- What amazing love this is - Jesus taking our punishment - taking our place - taking our death - upon Him

Application

How do we feel about this amazing truth - that Jesus died for us - that Jesus loves you and me that much - have we stopped and thought about how amazing that is? - or do we just take it for granted?

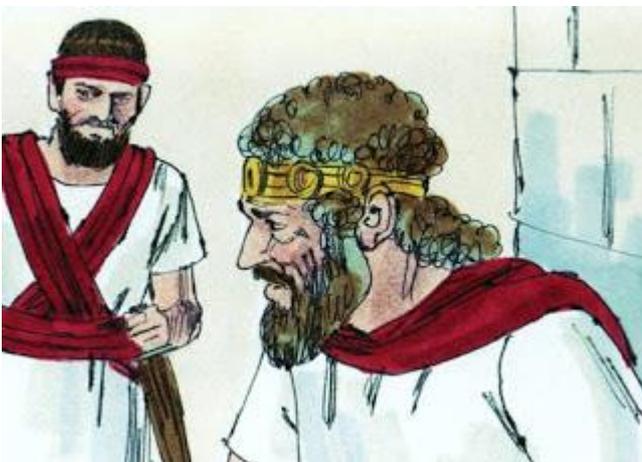
(pause)

Joab rebukes David over his grief for Absalom (2 Samuel 19:1-8)

- As much as David's grief over Absalom is totally understandable

- To be sure - losing a child is devastating
- Remember David is also a King - he has a kingdom to consider - he has subjects to consider - he has an army to consider
- In the TV series about the Royal Family - called **The Crown**, the Queen learns very early on in her reign - that the most important thing in her life has to be the Crown - her Queendom. For the British Royal Family to survive - the Queen's position as the Crown or Head of the country - is the most important thing - and often she has to set aside her personal feelings - for the sake of The Crown.
- David in his grief had forgotten his responsibility to his subjects in his kingdom
- As we hit chapter 19

[PowerPoint 5-Joab rebukes David]



- We see that Joab and the army are feeling humiliated and ashamed
- Because David is so absorbed in his grief for Absalom - David has not acknowledged that Joab and the army have rescued David's kingdom from being taken over

- It's like the army came back from battle as though they were defeated - not victorious!
- As Joab puts it in v6 - you love those who hate you [like Absalom] and hate those [like Joab and soldiers] who love you
- So, Joab gives David a huge wakeup call - he basically warns David - if you don't go and sit in front of the army and encourage them - you won't have an army by the end of the day
- That did the trick - David woke up to his mistake of being so absorbed in grief for Absalom
- And he acknowledges his men

Small application for us here - in our grief - we should not shut out those who love us

(pause)

The Tribes Reinstate David (2 Samuel 19:9-18a)

- With David suitably chastised for his neglect of his subjects
- We need to realize that even though Absalom is dead - David hasn't technically been reinstated as King
- The tribes of Israel had anointed Absalom as king and rejected David
- Now Absalom is gone - the tribes have to reinstate David
- But the tribes are busy arguing about what they should do with David - see v9-10

[PowerPoint 6-King David waits]

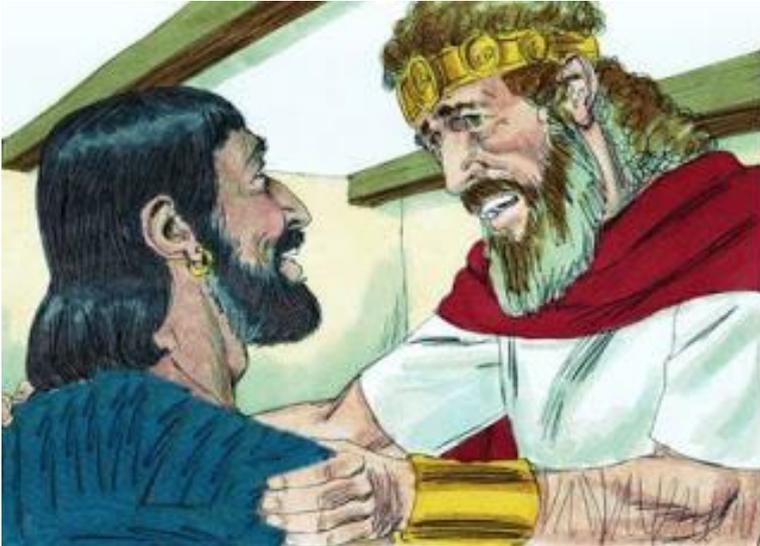


- David helps them to act by sending a message to the priests - Zadok and Abiathar - to tell the elders of David's own tribe, Judah - basically **you're my tribe - don't be the last of the 12 tribes to reinstate me as king**
- David even throws in a **sweetener** - he **offers** to appoint **Amasa** as **commander of the army for life in place of Joab**
- This **decision** has **2 motives**:
 - It **shows the extent of David's forgiveness** towards those who had rebelled against him - **Absalom had appointed Amasa commander** of his army - and David let's Amasa remain commander of the army - even though he was part of the rebellion
 - It **also punishes Joab** - as he was personally responsible for **Absalom's death**
- David's tactic works and he won over the hearts of the men of Judah - v14
- This opens the way then for David to be reinstated as King by all the tribes

David's kindness to his subjects (2 Samuel 19:18b-39)

- As David returns to Jerusalem as King
- He shows **kindness to 3 of his subjects** - whom we've come across before

[PowerPoint 7-David's Kindness]



- **Firstly Shimei**
- We came across **Shimei** in **chapter 16**
- As David was fleeing Jerusalem - **Shimei cursed David** - and **called him a murderer** and said that David was **responsible** for King **Saul's death** - even though, it wasn't true
- But look how genuine an apology Shimei gives - vv19-20
- "May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. ²⁰ For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first from the tribes of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king."
- It's a **sincere apology** but it doesn't convince Abishai, Joab's brother, who **wants Shimei to lose his head**

- But this is a day of celebration and **David is not going to allow anyone to die - even someone like Shimei**
- So, **David forgives Shimei** and **promises he will not die**
- Application
 - Is there someone in our lives we owe a sincere apology to?
 - Are we forgiving like David here?
- The **second person, David shows kindness to** is **Mephibosheth**
- **Mephibosheth is Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson**
- Mephibosheth is **disabled**
- We learnt back in **2 Samuel 16** that **Mephibosheth's servant, Ziba, told David that Mephibosheth was against David and for Absalom**
- Now here in this chapter 19 - **Mephibosheth turns up**
- See **v24**
- And such is Mephibosheth's loyalty to David - Mephibosheth has not taken care of his feet, or trimmed his moustache or washed his clothes since the day David fled Jerusalem to the day, David returned
- He's basically been in grieving for his king
- And **Mephibosheth tells David, Ziba's story is actually lies**
- We're not told if David believes Mephibosheth's version of events
- But David doesn't strip Ziba of all he previously gave him - he divides the land between Ziba and Mephibosheth
- Then we have a **remarkable response from Mephibosheth**
- See **v30** - Mephibosheth says - **Let him [Ziba] take everything, now that my lord the king has returned home safely.**

- Mephibosheth is saying all he needs is the King in his life - possessions don't matter
- Application - this should remind us that in King Jesus we have all we need

- As the chorus hymn goes:

HE'S ALL I NEED

HE'S ALL I NEED

Jesus is all I need

He's all I need

He's all I need

HE'S MY EVERYTHING

HE'S ALL I NEED

- Can we be like Mephibosheth and say honestly - King Jesus is all we need in our lives? Or do we still get tempted by the pull of this world - for more and more

(pause)

- The **third person**, David shows kindness to, is **Barzillai**
- We came across **Barzillai** back in **chapter 17**
- He was **very kind to David and his household** when David crossed the River Jordan
- Now here in chapter 19
- **David offers to bring Barzillai to Jerusalem and provide for him**
- But Barzillai politely declines - **he is old and wants to die in his home town**
- Instead Barzillai accepts David's offer for his son, Kimham

- And **David agrees** to take Kimham with him and provide for him
- Application - **Barzillai was a man of great resources** - and **he wisely used those resources** to support the servant of God and to support God's plan to preserve David. In Luke 12:21. **Jesus spoke of the foolish man who laid up treasure fir himself and was not rich towards God.** **Barzillai was wise enough to use his resources to lay up treasure in heaven and he was rich towards God. Are we wise enough to be rich towards God by supporting our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?**

(pause)

The Tribes quarrel over King David (2 Samuel 19:40-43)

- And so, the story continues with all the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel escorting King David across the Jordan and back to Jerusalem
- But the northern 10 tribes of Israel felt **excluded** in this ceremonial welcoming of David - see verses 41 to 43

[PowerPoint 8-2 Samuel 19:41-43]

41 ... *"Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, steal the king away ...*

...42 *All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "We did this because the king is closely related to us. Why are you angry about it? ...*

43 *Then the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king; so, we have a greater claim on David than you have. Why then do you treat us with contempt? Weren't we the first to speak of bringing back our king?"*

- They **accused** the tribe of **Judah** of **keeping King David to themselves**
- The **argument** was basically about who was more loyal to David - and who had the **greater right to honour him**
- The tribe of **Judah's** (which also includes tribe of Benjamin) **argument** was - **David was from the tribe of Judah and their flesh and blood**
- The **10 tribes of Israel's argument** was, **they had 10 shares in the King to Judah's 2 shares - and they had been the first to want to reinstate David**
- Application - as Christians we might fall for the trap of thinking we're greater than our fellow Christians - but as Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 20:20-28 - **being a Christian is not about being the greatest or about having a position or status - it's all about being a servant and being sacrificial** - as Jesus says - He came to serve and give his life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:28)

Conclusion/Challenge

To finish up then

In this passage from - 2 Samuel 18:19-19:43 - **David shows grace and love and mercy and forgiveness.**

The grace and love and mercy and forgiveness that David showed to 3 of his subjects - should remind us that - we have received that same grace and love and mercy and forgiveness - by God the Father - in sending Jesus the Son - to die on a cruel cross - so we can have forgiveness of our sins

[PowerPoint 9-Forgiven much - loves much]

What we have here is David who has been forgiven much - now loving much.
Perhaps there's a challenge for us here - to remember we have been forgiven much by Jesus - and our response should be to show that same measure of grace and love and mercy and forgiveness to others.

Let's pray