

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Oct. 2

MONDAY

David urged the woman to be open and honest, and then he asked her if the person behind all this was in fact Joab. The woman praised the king for his wisdom in recognizing this, and confirmed his suspicions as being correct.

READ: II Samuel 14:18-20

Who's the wise one in this story? Joab? For devising such a great plan? David? For figuring out that Joab was behind it all? Or the widow? For knowing when to be pipe down and when to sing out? It is God who gives wisdom, right? He gives the kind of wisdom we admire in all three. And He will give it to us as we trust Him, and ask for His wisdom. Can you imagine where this story would have gone without the wisdom part of it? Why would we put our lives thru that - living apart from God's wisdom?

TUESDAY

King David told Joab to go to Absalom and bring him home. Joab thanked David greatly for responding to what he had done - hiring the woman in that way. Then he went and got Absalom, and brought him back to Jerusalem.

READ: II Samuel 14:21-23

David's action here is a picture of how God gives us His grace. He is not willing that any should perish. He would give us grace. But he does so through another person. That is, He reconciles us to Himself through the mediator, Jesus Christ. It's as if God is saying to Jesus, "Go, bring that one to me." And Jesus does so! That's what Jesus did for me! And for you!

WEDNESDAY

When Absalom returned to Jerusalem, David instructed Joab to put him in his own house, out of David's sight. So that's what he did. Absalom is described as a wonderful specimen of a man with an unbelievable head of hair. He also had three sons and a beautiful daughter named Tamar. He didn't see David for two years.

READ: II Samuel 14:24-28

Why the emphasis on Absalom's physical comeliness? Maybe to explain why his father was so fond of him. Maybe because there was so little else that could be said good of him. "Many a polluted and deformed soul dwells within a fair and comely body," Matthew Henry writes. How much better if the author had been able to write of Absalom that he was a son like unto his father - one after God's own heart. Isn't that what we want for ourselves? To have a heart that throbs for God and His Kingdom!

WEDNESDAY

Absalom - unsuccessfully - tried on two occasions to have Joab take him to see David, but Joab refused to do so. So Absalom ordered his servants to go and burn Joab's field of barley.

READ: II Samuel 14:29-30

Absalom should be most grateful he had not been executed as the law demanded. Instead, he covets the throne, and needs at some level, to reconcile himself to David

in order to claim it. Burning Absalom's field (taking his wealth away) will force Absalom's cooperation, he thinks. Being grateful for what we have and not coveting what we don't have is a challenge for many in our day and age as well. Thanking God continuously for what He gives us is a good way to win that battle.

THURSDAY

Joab went to Absalom and asked him why he burned the field. Absalom explained that it was because he had not come when Absalom had summoned him. "I was better off where I was before," he whined. Joab reported all this to the king and David sent for Absalom. When Absalom came before his father, he bowed himself to the ground, and David kissed his son.

READ: II Samuel 14:31-33

David does not see an conniving son; he sees a son who, out of affection, wants to see his father. His greeting of Absalom can be seen as an official pardon. Here is an example of a good man being imposed upon by his own child. We are never called to deal with others blindly, but always to be wise. We are told to deal with our children (and others) according to wisdom - the wisdom that comes from God.

FRIDAY

Absalom had 50 men run in front of him as he moved about. He stayed near the gate which people used to see the king, and he greeted everyone, asking them what their business with the king might be. Then he told each that his problem was a deserving one, but suggested that David wasn't interested and would not grant it.

READ: II Samuel 15:1-3

Absalom no sooner has his father's favor restored to him than he set about the steal the kingdom. While David rides on a mule, Absalom dazzled the locals with the "look of royalty", riding about in a chariot pulled by a team of chargers! He pretended to side with each citizen he met. He strove to sow the seed of discontent within their minds. Stay away from sowers of discontent. Only weeds of bitterness will grow.

SATURDAY

Whenever someone came to the palace in Jerusalem to see King David for some reason, Absalom personally greeted him at the gate with a great show of affection - embracing and kissing him. Because everyone likes to be liked and loves to be acknowledged, he eventually stole the hearts of all the men of Judah.

READ: II Samuel 15:4-6

Absalom was a master showman, pretending to be a man of the common folk, and plotting the whole time to steal their loyalty. It's an old scheme. David wrote, "He humbles himself to draw them into his net." Let us determine for ourselves that we will always be exactly what we are! No false humility. No pretences. No masks. Just ourselves. And furthermore, let us determine that being "just myself" will mean having a heart for God and having His heart for others!

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