

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Oct.23

### MONDAY

Hearing Shimei curse and defame the king, Abishai asked David for permission to behead him on the spot. David told him not to do so, adding that perhaps God was behind all this. Then David put this unpleasant moment in perspective: "My own son is trying to kill me. How could we expect less from this guy? Let him live."

#### **READ: II Samuel 16:9-11**

David's response in all this was a great one. He knew that he was not guilty of what Shimei was accusing him of. Yet, at the same time, he knew he was guilty of much, much more. He may have been thinking of his sin with Bathsheba and all the follow-up sins. He specifically mentions the problems within his own house, and he may be remembering his short-comings as a father and spiritual leader in his family. With a humble and tender spirit, David turns the hateful charges into useful reproofs. No wonder God looks for humility in us. It's the "secret" to handling life well.

### TUESDAY

In explaining why he allowed Shimei to live, David said that perhaps God would repay him for showing mercy. Even as he was explaining this, Shimei continued to walk along side of them, throwing stones and cursing. Finally, David arrived at his destination, completely exhausted from the events of the trip. And arriving there, finally, he was refreshed.

#### **READ: II Samuel 16:12-14**

Sometimes we think that when (or maybe because) we do some good thing, our present troubles will end. Some people have started attending church for that reason – thinking that something good will come out of their effort. But David's story tells us that trouble sometimes follows us along. David traveled on, weary from the trip and from the on-going verbal abuse. We can identify with him, can't we? The troubles of life are still with us! Today is no better than yesterday! But at the same time, David's comfort is our comfort: the Lord sees all this and that's good enough for me! I leave it with Him. *Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, nobody knows but Jesus.*

### WEDNESDAY

Absalom and his many supporters flooded into Jerusalem, and Hushai, one of David's supporters (remember: he's an undercover spy) appeared before him. Absalom was suspicious of Hushai's new allegiance, and he asked him why he had forsaken King David. Hushai replied that he intended to support the king whom the Lord put upon the throne.

#### **READ: II Samuel 16:15-18**

Absalom hears Hushai's reply and is foolish enough to think that Hushai is talking about him - that God will put him on the throne. He was so full of pride and deceit that he did not know the difference between the work of God and his own greedy, self-centered efforts to displace his father and be the new king. Pride does that. It distorts everything to fit our own plans. Lord, remove my pride, and humble me before you this very day.

### THURSDAY

Hushai continued explaining why he had transferred his loyalty from David to Absalom by suggesting that it was as natural to serve the king's son as it had been to serve the father. He was saying that it was time for the son to rule. Then Absalom asked for advice from his advisors, starting with Ahithophel.

#### **READ: II Samuel 16:19-20**

Hushai is clever, and very careful with his words. He never actually promised to serve Absalom. He just said that he would serve in the same way. In fact, he will serve David in the same way that he has always served David! His loyalty and usefulness are in focus here. He willingly puts himself in harm's way in order to serve his king. Serving others requires such commitment. Lord, today, make me to be the servant of others. Loyal and useful for things that matter!

### FRIDAY

Ahithophel advised the King to show all his supporters that he was not afraid of his father, David, and that he should go to the King's concubines and make them his own. Absalom did so, and he did so in such a way that all the people knew what he was doing! Even though this is a terrible thing, the author reminds us in the final verse in the chapter that God was behind all this.

#### **READ: II Samuel 16:21-23**

The Lord is not slack concerning His promises! When David sinned with Bathsheba, God told him that he would have his own wives publicly debauched. (see 12:11,12) *Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap.* Absalom needed to learn that and so do we. Sowing righteousness is the way we must go. Planting seeds of goodness and truth. Watering with patience and endurance. And then keep on doing that, until the time comes when a great harvest is reaped! Farmers for Jesus!

### SATURDAY

Ahithophel was not done giving advice. He told Absalom to give him 12,000 soldiers and he would lead an assault on David while he was still worn and weary. He promised to kill David and bring many captives back to Jerusalem. At first, Absalom liked his plan.

#### **READ: II Samuel 17:1-4**

Ahithophel is suggesting that if the shepherd (David) dies, the sheep (citizens) will scatter. And they will need a new shepherd (Absalom). The Pharisees said the same thing about Jesus: *Let one man die for all.* (Jn.11:50) Among other things, they meant that if Jesus died, it would be possible for all the people - so misguided by him - to get back on track. We know that, in fact, Jesus did die for all, but the result was not a scattering but a gathering! From all ages, countries, and tribes, God is gathering for Himself His own people! And the authentic believer will cry out: "I want everyone to know that I am part of that great gathering! I have a shepherd who cares for me!"

#53