

Belonging

God's Redemptive Story thru David--part 3

January 24, 2016

DAY 1: The Necessity of Friendships

1. After Nathan confronts David with his sin of adultery and murder, life cratered for David. His adult sons were out of control, one of his sons usurped the throne, and another son raped a step sister. His family in shambles, and his kingship lost, David flees for his life.

2. When life comes crashing in we are haunted by loneliness. It seems like people retreat, some wanting to do something but not knowing what to do or say. Discouragement is ramped up when there seems to be no one to help shoulder your grief.

3. At times like that we don't need a teacher or counselor. We don't need a lawyer. What most helps are different kinds of friends, especially the kind that are good listeners, people who will walk with you through thick and thick!

4. **Those kinds of friends don't just happen.** Friendships have to be developed and deepened. These kinds of friendships are **built**. It takes intentionality and investment in their welfare.

5. David was fraught with guilt. He knew he had been a hypocrite and his shame was public knowledge. God's name and law (standards) had been trashed.

6. What does the bible say makes for a great friend? Make a note underneath each of the following verses:

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 18:24 A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Ecclesiastes 4:10 If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

3 John 1:5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you.

7. What do you most want in a friend when you are in a crisis?

8. What kind of friend are you when someone is in crisis?

DAY 2: Impressive Loyalty in the Face of Failure

1. Over the next four days, we'll look at friends that made a difference when David's life was in freefall.

2 Samuel 15:13 A messenger came and told David, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

¹⁴ Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword."

2. Absalom, David's son, had usurped the throne. Absalom had showed himself to be a treacherous young man.

3. If you had been part of David's regime, and now you were clearly on the outside and to stay with the old guy meant you were on the "Most Wanted" list, what would you be tempted to do?

2 Samuel 15:15 The king's officials answered him, "Your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses."

4. What different things strike you about the attitudes of the king's officials?

5. What affect do you think their attitude had on King David?

2 Samuel 15:16 The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace.

¹⁷ So the king set out, with all the people following him, and they halted at a place some distance away.

¹⁸ All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.

6. Different segments of his old army march out of Jerusalem with him.

2 Samuel 15:19 The king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland.

²⁰ You came only yesterday. And today shall I make you wander about with us, when I do not know where I am going? Go back, and take your countrymen. May kindness and faithfulness be with you."

²¹ But Ittai replied to the king, "As surely as the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be."

²² David said to Ittai, "Go ahead, march on." So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him.

7. What attitudes do you pick up in Ittai? Which of these challenges you to be a better friend?

DAY 3: Loyalty and Commitment Runs 2 Ways

1. As the king and his entourage flee for their lives they pass through the countryside.

2 Samuel 15:23 The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by. The king also crossed the Kidron Valley, and all the people moved on toward the desert.

²⁴ *Zadok was there, too, and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city.*

2. Zadok and Abiathar were priests. At risk to their own lives, they also leave Jerusalem with David, bringing the ark of the covenant with them. Abiathar is offering sacrifices.

3. What effect would their loyalty and courage had on you?

2 Samuel 15:25 Then the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the LORD's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again.

²⁶ *But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him."*

2 Samuel 15:27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Aren't you a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan son of Abiathar. You and Abiathar take your two sons with you.

4. King David is willing to release Zadok from the danger Zadok is taking. David is willing to "let loose" the loyalty and courage of Zadok's friendship and encouragement for Zadok's benefit!

What in David's thinking and attitude allows him to do that? (v. 25)

5. Friendship doesn't just run David's way. How is David looking out for the welfare of his friends and their families?

2 Samuel 15:28 I will wait at the fords in the desert until word comes from you to inform me."

²⁹ *So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.*

³⁰ *But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up.*

6. David's grief is evident to everyone. What strikes you most from today's devotional?

DAY 4: Bear One Another's Burdens

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

1. We've seen friendship traits like loyalty, courage and sticking in with people through thick and thin. There is another kind of powerful friendship--someone who understands your grief and bears it along with you, as if carrying some of it on their shoulders, lightening your load! This kind of friendship is priceless when you are grieving.

2 Samuel 15:32 When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head.

2. A robe that was torn and dust on one's head are two marks of the deepest kind of grief. Hushai the Arkite had seen what was going on and was already grieving by the time David reached the summit.

3. Can you think of an example of someone who seemed to bear your grief with you? What did you sense from them? What attitude(s) did you see in them toward you and the grief you bore through trouble?

4. But Hushai is not "just" a man who deeply sympathizes with David. He is willing to do whatever is needed!

2 Samuel 15:33 David said to him, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me.

³⁴ *But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice.*

³⁵ *Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace.*

³⁶ *Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear."*

³⁷ *So **David's friend** Hushai arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.*

5. David's son, Absalom, had usurped the throne. Absalom was a dangerous man. He had become what we call a "cutthroat." David gets the idea of setting up an informal "spy network," using the two priests we've studied, their sons, and now Hushai, all of whom would have access to Absalom and his inner circle.

6. Hushai accepts the very dangerous assignment, entering Jerusalem at the same time as Absalom. Notice what the writer calls Hushai in v. 37.

7. What strikes you the most about the friendship of Hushai?

DAY 5: Friends meeting timely practical needs.

1. Up until King David and his courtly entourage had to flee for their lives, the king's needs were met with the palace treasury. Suddenly that is no longer available.

2. Part of David's plight was simple, practical needs. He and his entourage went from the palace to no lodgings, from tasty and plentiful food to no food, and from any kind of drink to the search for water.

3. When David's team gets to the town of Mahanaim, they are met by three special and timely friends.

2 Samuel 17:27 When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim²⁸ brought bedding and bowls and articles of pottery. They also brought wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils,²⁹ honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from cows' milk for David and his people to eat. For they said, "The people have become hungry and tired and thirsty in the desert."

4. Look back at these few verses. What strikes you about the provisions they brought?

5. What effects do you think this had on King David when he saw what these men had done for him and his people?

6. What effects would this have had on you?

7. These kinds of friendships don't just "happen." They are two-way streets that are built, over a long period of time. It is unrealistic to believe that people will just show up if you have not built into their lives these kind of friendship traits.

8. Evaluate your role in the lives of your friends. Are you building? Are you attentive to their different needs? Is there something you could do to be a better friend?