

Series: Biblical Heroes and Zeros – week 7

CDOBC – beginning on 10/17/10

Title: “Absalom”

December 5, 2010

2 Samuel 13-18

OBJECTIVE: To help believers avoid the mistakes that marked Absalom’s life.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Christmas Poinsettias
- CDOBC Christmas Events / Services
- Door hangers available next week!
- Men’s breakfast
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TKU – Decorations in sanctuary: Sheryl Beyer, Lisa Horner, Sheryl Cottrell, Kim V.K.

Opening prayer

Absalom is one of the most interesting persons in Scripture. The account of his life is full of enough drama and intrigue, murder and revenge, success and failure, to make a Hollywood producer drool. Absalom was one of King David’s sons – but he was by far the most disappointing of them all. If you combine your modern day images of all that is bad and evil about some politicians, and all that is bad and evil about human nature itself – you have a pretty good portrait of Absalom. His name means “*Father of Peace*” – but this was not to be the experience of his life.

Turn to 2 Samuel

2 Samuel 14:25-26 tell us how attractive Absalom was. (**Read 14:23-26**) (Since we don’t have any portraits of Absalom, whenever you hear his name and wonder what he looked like...just think of Fabio...with Troy Palamalu hair!)

This is the most positive thing stated about him in Scripture. Unfortunately, this summary describes the depth of his character – he didn’t have any. Absalom was an arrogant egomaniac, driven

by his own desire for revenge and lust for power, with absolutely no spiritual life or desire to follow God and His commands. This is why Absalom is a Biblical Zero. He had no faith in God, even though he was surrounded by people of faith. He either ignored or actively rejected the things of God! He had belief – but his belief was in himself, not in God or His commands.

Let's look at the account of Absalom – and see what lessons we can learn for our life today.

Anger and revenge motivated his life. 2 Sam. 13

Absalom is introduced to us in a terrible context. David had a number of wives, and one of his wives, Maacah (My-uh-kay) – who was the daughter of the King of Geshur (Gē-shur), bore him a daughter, Tamar, and a son, Absalom. From another of his wives, was his first-born son, Amnon (Am-nōn).

So, Amnon and Tamar were ½ brother and sister – same father, different mother.

2 Sam. 13:1 tells us that Tamar was beautiful, but the verse also tells us a disturbing thing...that her ½ brother, Amnon, was infatuated with her and that he had fallen in love with her.

I'll spare you the details, but there were many things wrong here. Not only do we see once again the terrible fallout of polygamy, but Amnon's desired relationship with his ½ sister broke many of God's commands (Lev. 18:11). This didn't matter to him, and when he couldn't convince her to sleep with him willingly, he raped her – and then immediately had her thrown out of his presence like a piece of trash.

As you might imagine, this didn't sit well with her brother, Absalom. His anger and hatred toward Amnon for the incestuous rape of his ½ sister, Tamar is understandable. In fact, there is a sense of righteous anger that is appropriate here toward Amnon. However, Absalom did not make

appeals to his father, David, for justice. Instead, he plotted in his heart to get revenge and he concealed his intent from everyone. He allowed his hatred and anger to grow and two years later, when he had the opportunity, he murdered Amnon. This was clearly a case of pre-meditated murder.

David does nothing in a judicial or parental sense. We're not told why he is so passive in these episodes...we are simply told what happens, and justice is absent from the account. Absalom flees to Geshur, his mother's homeland, and lives in exile there for three years (13:38). While there, hatred is still brewing in his heart.

After this time of exile, Absalom returns to Jerusalem at David's request (14:21-23). Absalom is reinstated (to a point) in Jerusalem. David does not rebuke him; he does not reprimand him for murdering David's oldest son. In essence, David is giving Absalom an unofficial pardon for his crime. To Absalom, this would have seemed like a blessing or approval from God. He was guilty of murder, but surprisingly, he escapes any penalty for his actions.

Illus. – Hitler's view of God's providence – Davis, p. 182

Just because someone escapes justice – just because a wicked or sinful act results in profit, gain, or advancement, does not indicate the protection or blessing of God in the matter. Absalom may have thought God was endorsing his plan, but He was not. Just like Joseph's brothers, God was using Absalom's evil and sinful ways in His providential plan, but this did not excuse Absalom's responsibility and culpability in these things.

He disguised his evil intent with compassion. 15:1-6

Read 15:1-6

Here we see the worst side of a politician. Absalom has great looks...the TV camera loves him! The elaborate entourage of the chariot limo, the horses, and the fifty runners make a grand impression...this guy has it all together! He's cool and hip – his public appearance sends a message that people like to see. He says all the right things. He's like the politician in the weeks before the Iowa Caucus who loosens his tie, puts on a John Deere hat, rolls up his sleeves, and makes sure that he is seen talking to the farmers, listening to them and empathizing with their struggles and concerns. He tells them that if he were in charge, he would listen and they would have an advocate on the throne! He tells them that he is one of them (vs. 5-6), but in reality, it's all a lie. It's a lie to gain their favor – their support. He cares for one thing – his own power and position. He's not concerned with solving any problems of the people – he's using them to accomplish his own goals and aspirations! The whole ruse is not to help anyone but himself. He has no real compassion for the people's problems. His only purpose is to breed dissatisfaction among the people with the King – and he's lying every step of the way to accomplish his goal – to take the throne for himself!

He disguised his evil intent with fake piety. 15:7-12

Read 15:7-12

Amazing...he did this for four years (Four years total or 1 year in Jerusalem + three years exile?)! After that time, he approaches David, and asks permission to go to Hebron to worship. Absalom claims this was to fulfill a vow he made while living in Exile. Why did it take him four years to fulfill this vow? He says

the vow was for the Lord bringing him back to Jerusalem, but he's been back for four years! Why now?

Well, because his intent was not to worship, but to kill – to capture the throne.

He received his father's blessing – and he puts his elaborate scheme into motion.

He had no shame for his sin. 16:21-22

(Summarize the events leading up to 16:21-22 (David flees, Absalom takes over the throne, he's now in the palace...now what?), then read vs.)

Absalom had no shame regarding the sexual sin he commits. No shame regarding his disrespect and offense to his father, David.

No shame regarding the public nature of his sin.

No shame for his murder of his brother, Amnon.

No shame for his lying to the people who needed justice.

No shame for using worship as a means to glorify himself.

David had some great periods in his life where he was truly faithful to God and his relationship with God is unparalleled.

However, he was also a man who struggled with sin at times also. David committed murder, adultery, and he also committed various sins related to his kingship. However, what made David so special – what made him a “man after God's own heart” was that his sin haunted him. The shame of his sin ate away at his heart until he would eventually repent and confess his sins to God.

Absalom's lack of shame – and therefore, his lack of repentance and confession, is the biggest reason he is a Biblical zero!

All of us sin. None of us live a perfect life – although we should be pursuing holiness and purity. But when a believer

sins, we have the Holy Spirit within us, convicting us of our sin, which is where the shame comes in – and our shame

Application

Forgive the sin of others.

How do you handle your anger? Do you allow it to grow and harden your heart to the point of only caring about revenge...about evening the score with the one who has offended you?

Last week we saw how Joseph had forgiven his brothers – you also need to forgive those who have sinned against you and hurt you. If this is difficult, ask God to help soften your heart and to give you the desire to forgive. Ask a fellow believer to help you to forgive.

Have pure motives.

Absalom hid his true, evil plans with compassion and with worship. He used things that were good, to hid what was bad.

Are you befriending someone to get something for yourself?

Are you at church to get closer to that boy/girl?

Are you at church to advance your career...to look good to others?

These motives are the same as Absalom's.

We need to befriend and help others – because we want to love them and serve them – not for self-advancement.

We need to worship because God is worthy of our worship – He deserves the glory.

Thank God for shame / guilt.

Our culture utterly rejects shame and guilt for immoral behavior. But shame and guilt is a gift from God. For the believer, shame and guilt due to immoral actions and attitudes is the Holy Spirit's work in our life. I don't like the feeling of shame or guilt...it's not a pleasant thing...but they act as a restraint on our sin. Shame and guilt do two things for us...first, they keep us from going "full speed" down the pathway of sin. Second, they bring us back to God and start us on the road to repentance and confession.

Absalom had no shame or guilt – so he never repented from his sin. As a believer, understand the importance and blessing of shame and guilt...embrace it...thank God for the Holy Spirit's ministry of conviction in your life.

Close in prayer...transition to communion