

Sorrow and Betrayal

Call to Worship: Psalm 63:1-5

1st Scripture: Matthew 26:36-50

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 15:30-37

Hymn Insert- *Power of the Cross*

Hymn Insert- *Every Promise of Your Word*

Hymn #6 (Supp)- *Lead Me to Calvary*

Introduction:

David and his followers, have fled Jerusalem, seeking to escape the treasonous grasp of David's son, Absalom, who has organized a strong conspiracy against David. They have crossed the Brook Kidron, heading east, toward the Jordan River. This morning, we will follow David up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, where his great sorrow will be further multiplied, as he is informed about his close friend and counselor, Ahithophel, who is part of Absalom's conspiracy against David.

I. Sorrow

"So David went up by the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up" (vs. 30).

As the glorious City of David, faded more and more into the background, the weight of grief, which filled David's heart, began to relieve itself, in the form of tears. It was, indeed, another time of great sorrow, which David had to pass through. And although sorrow was not a thing, with which David was unfamiliar, there were new dimensions to this sorrow, which helped break open the tear ducts of David's eyes. It was a sorrow, which was full of great regret, for the past, short-lived sin, which he had committed with Bathsheba. David knew very well, that this was yet, a product of his own wretched sin of adultery. Perhaps, he could hear the judgment of Nathan, pronounced against him, as he trekked up the Mountain, as he wept out the repeated chant, "How could I," "Why did I," "If only I didn't..." And it was also a sorrow of great remorse, for the condition of Absalom's heart. What pain must have struck David's heart, to realize that one of his own sons; the child, whom he once held with great joy and pride, in his infancy; the son, who played a significant role in many of David's past memories, was now, but a pawn of

evil, and a son of the devil! I can hardly think of a more painful blow to the soul, than to know that satan has laid hold of the heart of one of my offspring, having turned him/her against me, and worse even, against the living God! And David's sorrow was a sorrow of great loss, as he was forced to flee away from the City, which he so deeply loved. Jerusalem, the City of David, and the place of God's dwelling among His people, was now behind David. He used to awaken each morning, and look down upon the city, and the people, that he so deeply loved; the City, which became the subject of many a Psalm, which David had penned; that representative City, which pictured and symbolized the eternal habitation and fellowship of God's people...it was now behind him. And he knew not, when he would return. David treasured being among the people of God, and while a large group followed him now, those who traveled, went as a displaced people, from the glorious City!

Indeed, such sorrows broke the heart of David. And the hearts of those who were with him, shared his grief, covering their heads in shame, as they sought to convey outwardly, the inward mourning, which had overwhelmed them all. For, here they were, with their now displaced and humbled king, who walked *not* with any residue of a kingly majesty, but with his head covered, and his feet bare. The scene was one of great humility, shame and sorrow. And at the base of it all; at the very root of the pitiful scene, was the destructive seed of sin. Sin was the cause of this great heartache and sorrow. Indeed, it is the cause of all heartache and sorrow. It is that, which quickly transforms the very joy of existence, peace and rest, into chaos, toil and anguish. We might also see, in the shadow of David here, the silhouettes of Adam and Eve, walking away from the Paradise Garden of Eden, following their sin and rebellion against God, when they had taken and eaten of the forbidden fruit...a heap of regret, for such a deceptive, short-lived experience.

But indeed, where David sowed tears of sorrow here; perhaps in the very footprints, our Lord Jesus Christ (David's greater son), would Himself sow a heaping of his own tears, wouldn't He? Was it not on this same mountain, that the Son of God, desperate and full of anguish, would spill forth His own tears, carrying the repeated, urgent plea, "Father, if it is possible; if there is any other way...take this cup from Me...nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." Was it not here, where our Lord was so overwhelmed with grief; where He could receive no comfort from

His snoozing disciples; where even, on a cold evening, He had sweat drops of blood because of the great anguish, which pressed Him down; was it not here, that our Lord was only capable of making it to the cross, because an angel had appeared to Him from heaven, providing Him with the strength to go on (Luke 22:43-44)? Indeed, at the Mount of Olives, our Lord was as the olive, put into the press of anguish, such that bloody sweat and tears, were squeezed out of Him!

And what was at the root of His great suffering and anguish? Was it not *our* sin? Was it not the bearing of our sin, soon to come, at the cross, which struck Him down, here, in the Garden, on the Mount? Was it not the anxious anticipation of the wrath of God, finding its target in the body and soul of our Savior, which led, even the Son of God, Himself, to weep and sweat, tears and drops of terror, right here on this Mount? Indeed, the same soil, which had received David's tears of sorrow and regret, would later receive the tears of Christ, but for no sorrow or regret of His own...for this, He did for us!

II. Betrayal

"Then someone told David, saying, 'Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom'" (vs. 31a).

As if David's sorrow and remorse were not deep enough, adding salt to the wound, was the news of Ahithophel's part in the conspiracy against him. Ahithophel was a close friend and counsellor to David; a man, full of great wisdom, and within whom, David had deposited a deep trust. He could easily recall memories of close fellowship, encouragement, joy, and laughter, which he had shared with this man. But now, to find out that he had secretly turned his face against David, would have struck David's heart with an arrow of bitterness and deep sorrow. The words of Psalm 41:9 and Psalm 55:12-14, breathe the air, of this terrible reality:

Psalm 41:9- "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."

Psalm 55:12-14- "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; Then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; Then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, My companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng."

Indeed, the pain of betrayal can be of the worst kind! When someone toys with your trust and your heart in that way, it can be very difficult to recover, and to be transparent and genuine with others. Thanks be unto God, that he can heal such a heart, and restore it to its tender state.

And furthermore, we have a Savior who can very much identify with such pain, don't we? For, again, it is in David's anguish here on the Mount, that we peek into our Lord's anguish on the same Mount. Even as David tasted the bitter betrayal of Ahithophel, adding to his deep sorrow, our Lord tasted the bitter betrayal of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him with a kiss, right here, on the same mountain. And the words, from the very Psalms, which we have quoted, felt and experienced by David, were also prophetic utterances, placed upon our Lord's tongue, many years later. Indeed, David's lesser agony here, was a foreshadowing of the later sufferings of the Christ, experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane, upon the Mount of Olives!

III. David's Response

How then does David respond to this news, accompanied by the sorrow, which had already overwhelmed his heart? You will recall, that last time, we saw that, when Zadok and the Levites, attempted to follow David, with the ark, that David had sent them back to Jerusalem, resigning himself to the will of God, concerning the matter of his return to see the ark again. Well here, David acts consistent with that same quality of humility. Notice, even with one wave of sorrow upon another, beating upon David, rather than complaining against God, he turns to God in two very profound ways:

1) He seeks the help of God, asking for God to frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel. "And David said, 'O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!'" (vs. 31b).

David knows that Ahithophel is a wise man, whose counsel is basically flawless. And yet, he can do nothing to stop Ahithophel; Ahithophel is untouchable from David's standpoint. And so, David seeks help from the arm of the Lord, confident that God can do what man cannot do. And indeed, God will intervene in this way, shielding David from the harm, which Ahithophel's counsel could cause him. In fact, God will begin to answer this prayer immediately.

2) David goes up to the top of the mountain, *and worships God!* Verse 32a- "Now it happened when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God..."

What did David do at the top of the mountain...as he was in the midst of fleeing from Absalom, having just heard about Ahithophel's part in the conspiracy? He worshiped! Do you see that same humble heart, which has earlier expressed its resignation to the will of God, consistently fixing its gaze upon God, here? With all of the unresolved and weighty troubles, weighing upon David, what does he do? The same thing that he had done, immediately following the death of his son (with Bathsheba): He worshiped God! Some believe that it is right at this point, when David had penned the words of Psalm 3, expressing both his burden to, and his confidence in God, to bring him through this present, very difficult, and humanly impossible trial.

And so, brethren, David casts the bitter burden of Ahithophel's treason, upon his God, and in the midst of great sorrow and turmoil, he worships his God. And this is not unlike the Lord Jesus Christ, who amidst His sleeping disciples, poured out His soul before His Father, as He prepared to receive Judas's betrayal, leading to the cross.

IV. God's Response

And brethren, it is right here, at this scene, where suddenly, someone else, "coincidentally" and unexpectedly approaches David.

"Now it happened when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God--*there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head.*"

David prays, concerning the matter of Ahithophel, he worships God, and the answer to his prayer comes strolling along, as a fellow mourner, and faithful follower of the king. Another friend, and wise counselor, who has not betrayed David, has arrived on the scene, not knowing, that he would be the very tool, used by God, to frustrate and defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

David sends Hushai back to Jerusalem, as one who would pretend to have joined the conspiracy, looking for a way to hinder any harmful counsel, which Ahithophel might give to Absalom, concerning bringing about the final defeat and destruction of David. And with the help of Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and their sons, a formidable secret alliance was formed, working for David, in the midst of Absalom's treachery. And so, Hushai returns to Jerusalem, a secret weapon in the hand of God, appointed to help bring about the very downfall of

Ahithophel, and Absalom, for that matter. And finally, we are told, that Absalom had come into Jerusalem, ignorant of the counter-conspiracy, which was set against him, aiming to restore the kingdom back to David. And the Lord's work to this end, was now in progress. [Read verses 33-37]

V. Concluding Thoughts and Applications

Having worked through the text then, brethren, let us conclude our time, by considering a few closing thoughts and applications:

1) Brethren, let us remember that the ultimate root of all suffering, is sin. Now, I am not saying, that every time we suffer, there must be some way, in which we have sinned, to cause that suffering. The case of Job, clearly disproves that fallacious assumption. However, all suffering; the very existence of suffering, only exists, in a world that has been infiltrated by the spiritual plague of sin. If sin had never entered the world, suffering would not exist, period.

And so, while God is absolutely sovereign over all things; while nothing under the sun, is done, apart from His sovereign will (even the hairs on our head are numbered, and a sparrow does not fall to the ground apart from His will), at the same time, every grievous and painful reality, experienced in this world, is a product of a fallen creation, which is naturally in rebellion against its Creator. Rape and murder and child molestation and starvation and thievery and every form of criminal reality, and every form of disease and hardship, all have their origin in the fall of our first parents. And that being the case, we can never, ever, frown upon God, for the harsh providences, which we face in this life. In fact, to the contrary, we ought to be full of praise toward God, for any and every sign of His grace to be found, be it common grace, or grace unto salvation, because the kindness and mercy of God, are never deserved or to be presupposed, in a world, which has rebelled against Him. Judgment and calamity can and ought to be expected, but not kindness and grace. [Ex. A prison full of the vilest of prisoners]

And brethren, here is the capstone to the whole ordeal. As we have seen in our examination of the text, in David's suffering, which had a direct link to his own sin, there was a very real and clear foreshadowing of the sufferings of Christ, who alone, endured undeserved hardships and agony of the worst kind...for our sin! Christ was subject to the sorrows of this life

(He was a "Man of sorrows" indeed), though He alone did not deserve any suffering, let alone, the hellish infusion of the wrath of God, which He had absorbed on the cross. And brethren, all of this, He did for us! Let us never forget that His suffering, was unto judgment, so that our suffering, though inevitably linked to our fallen world, is only, always, unto sanctification.

2) Friends, let us be reminded here that, although *all* will endure much hardship and sorrow in this life (again, we live in a fallen world), the sun will always, ultimately rise on the righteous! All of our sufferings in this life, brethren, are temporal. There must and will be an end to them. Indeed, they are great. They are painful. They draw out many tears. As we have observed the life of David, for these many months, we have trekked with him, while he was fleeing from Saul, when Saul had killed all of the priests of Nob, when he returned to a burnt down Ziklag, with his wives having been kidnapped by the Amalekites, when he had been confronted about his sin with Bathsheba, when his son had died, when Amnon had violated Tamar, when Absalom had murdered Amnon, and now this, and more to come, haven't we? David's life was filled with many sorrows. But brethren, at the end of the day, the sun rose upon David, didn't it? [Because it darkened on the crucified Christ]. And therefore, it will certainly rise upon us, brethren.

But not so, for the wicked. The Scriptures very clearly teach that the "wicked will be turned into hell, and every nation that forgets God." The sorrow of the ungodly is eternal, friends. If you are unsaved, this morning, this is as close to heaven as you will ever experience. Should you die without Christ, your worst sufferings and sorrows in this life, will only grow exponentially, beyond what you could even possibly imagine (in the present)...and that forever! [The Gospel!]

3) Finally, brethren, let us learn again from David, to worship and glorify God, even in, and by our sufferings. David resigned himself to the will of God, brethren, and here, he worshiped. When God said, "No," to David's fasting for the life of his son, following his son's death, David washed himself, changed his clothing, and went into the house of God to worship. When David fled up the Mount of Olives, head covered, bare foot, wet with tears, only to hear the news of Ahithophel's part in the conspiracy, what did he do? Did he complain against God? Did he declare God to be unfair, in some way? Did he present himself as the victim of harsh and

unjust providence? No. He worshiped! It was a painful and agonizing time. The burden was still strong upon his back. And yet, in a most inconvenient, painful and sorrowful time, he gave glory to God, and worshiped. With Job, he said, as it were, "Should we only expect the good that God grants us...The Lord gives, and The Lord takes away. Blessed be the Name of The Lord." And so, let us always be prepared to give glory to God, in and during our trials, acknowledging His perfect will, over all things, and at all times. And by so doing, be assured, that God's sanctifying grace, will accomplish its perfect work in your heart. And remember, you have a glorious, very present Savior, who can identify with your sufferings and hardships, and even with your temptations. And He cares for you!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25