

Introduction

1. Luke 15 records the parable of the Prodigal Son which is ultimately a story of reconciliation:
 - a. You know the story...a wealthy man has two sons and the younger son demands his inheritance early, heads out into the world and squanders everything he has
 - b. After hiring himself out as a servant and still not having enough to eat, he determines to humble himself, go home to his father, seek forgiveness, declare himself an unworthy son, and begs to be given a job among his father's servants
 - c. Instead, his father forgives him, welcomes him back with open arms and throws a celebration (much to the demise of his older brother)
2. Today we have a similar story of reconciliation and while it doesn't have the happy ending of the Prodigal Son, we will see how this story, like the parable, reflects the reconciliation we find in the Gospel
3. Last week we learned that David's oldest son Amnon raped his half-sister, Tamar, and in an act of retribution was then murdered by Tamar's brother and his half-brother, Absalom David's second eldest son
4. Our passage ended last week with Absalom in exile after having fled out of fear for his own life and the last thing we read was that after some time had passed David "**longed to go out to Absalom**"—after all, he essentially lost two sons, one to murder and the other who was now exile far from home

A. Joab executes a plan to reconcile David and his son, Absalom (14:1-17)

1. Joab enlists the help of a woman to approach David by presenting a fictitious legal matter (READ 14:1-3):
 - a. Did you notice how closely this resembles the way Nathan approached David over his sin with Bathsheba?
 - b. In this case, the plan is to confront David over Absalom's banishment (e.g. David's refusal to allow him back into his presence)
2. The woman presents her case before David (READ 4-7)—Her case is essentially this:
 - a. She is a widow with no husband who had two sons
 - b. The two sons got in a fight and one killed the other (6)
 - c. Her relatives were now demanding that she give up the son so they could kill him to avenge the other son's death (7a)
 - d. However, this would leave her and her husband with no descendants and wipe out his name from the earth forever (7b)
3. David rules in favor of the woman in a remarkable and compassionate application of the Law (READ 8-11):
 - a. The situation the woman describes is straight out of the Law:
 - 1) Did you notice that she refers to the "**avenger of blood**" in v. 11?
 - 2) Numbers 35:19-34 provides the legal guidelines for dealing with murderers and it involves a family member of the victim being given not only the legal right but the

obligation to put to death the murderer—this family member is called the avenger of blood

- 3) However, to protect those who killed someone accidentally or in self-defense from personal vengeance, the Lord established six Levitical cities of refuge to which the individual could flee and seek protection

- b. David could have told her to send her son to one of the cities of refuge if she thought he was innocent—those cities were setup to handle such legal cases
- c. However, David ruled on the case himself sparing her son's life, protecting her future, and preventing her husband's name from being wiped out
- d. The most remarkable thing about David's ruling however, might be something that's rather subtle and may be what influenced his decision:
 - 1) Did you notice how similar the woman's story is to another famous Bible event?
 - a) Two brothers in a field
 - b) One rises up against the other and kills him
 - c) He then fears for his own life as he wanders the earth

 - 2) Did you notice how similar David's response to the woman is to the LORD's response to Cain?
 - a) The Lord spared Cain's life and then put a mark on him so no one would kill him to avenge Abel's death
 - b) David spared the life of the woman's son and issued a decree prohibiting the avenger of blood from taking his life

 - 3) I believe the woman's plea in v. 11 influenced David's decision: **"Please let the king remember the LORD your God..."**
 - a) As a man who loved and understood the Law as much as David, he had to have seen the similarities between the woman's story and that of Cain and Abel
 - b) I also have to imagine that when prompted to remember the LORD, David had to be reminded of the LORD's incredible mercy, grace and forgiveness when it came to his own murder of Uriah

4. The woman confronts David over his banishment of Absalom (READ 12-17):
 - a. She does something remarkable by accusing David of putting Israel at risk (12-14a):
 - 1) As David's eldest son, Absalom was viewed as the rightful heir of the throne and would continue to serve and protect Israel after David's death
 - 2) However, by banishing Absalom, David was preventing Absalom from inheriting the throne and would leave Israel without their rightful king
 - 3) NOTE: we know God's plan was different and that Solomon would inherit the kingdom

 - b. She does something else remarkable by reminding David of one of the most important theological doctrines in the entire Bible: reconciliation
 - 1) Reconciliation refers to the mending of a broken relationship
 - 2) Look again at v. 14b: **"Yet God does not take away life, but plans ways so that the banished one will not be cast out from Him."**
 - 3) She reminds David that God is a God that not only desires reconciliation, but **"plans ways"** to make reconciliation possible
 - 4) This is the Gospel in a nutshell! (READ Romans 5:10-11)

- c. She does all of this with the humility and grace one who was both afraid to approach the king, but hopeful he would be able to discern good from evil (READ 15-17)

B. David reconciles with Absalom (14:18-33)
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1. David ultimately realizes that Joab was behind the woman's plan (READ 18-20)
2. David calls Absalom back to Jerusalem, but does not reconcile with him immediately (READ 21-24):
 - a. The woman's words have an effect on David because he calls on Joab to bring Absalom back home to Jerusalem
 - b. However, David refuses to allow Absalom to see him—and this is a deliberate decision on David's part (v. 24)
 - c. The text doesn't tell us why David refused to allow Absalom to see him, so we are left to speculation:
 - 1) 13:39 and 14:1 make it clear that David longed to see him so David's decision likely wasn't due to bitterness or anger
 - 2) It is more likely that David refused to allow Absalom into his presence as a form of discipline or a means of forcing Absalom to recognize there were consequences for his sin
3. Absalom demands to see David (25-32):
 - a. After we're given some biographical information about Absalom, we learn that after two years of not being allowed to see David, Absalom is growing impatient and calls for Joab to take him to David (READ 28-29):
 - 1) It appears that Absalom had been waiting all this time to learn his fate
 - 2) After two years of silence he was frustrated and tired of waiting
 - b. When Joab fails to respond to his calls, Absalom takes drastic measures (READ 30-32):
 - 1) He gets Joab's attention by burning Joab's fields
 - 2) He demands that Joab take him to David where he can finally face David and his fate
4. David welcomes Absalom back into his presence and initiates reconciliation with him (READ 33):
 - a. Absalom's posture seems to suggest a certain amount of humility and respect, but as we learn in a few verses it was likely something he did simply out of protocol because he soon turns to conspiring against David
 - b. We see the opposite with David who kisses Absalom in a beautiful act of affection, forgiveness, acceptance, and reconciliation
5. In many respects, we see a foreshadowing of the Gospel here:
 - a. Absalom had alienated himself from his father because of his sin—Likewise, mankind alienates himself from God the Father because of sin
 - b. David initiated reconciliation with Absalom by not counting his transgression against him and forgiving him—Likewise God initiates reconciliation with the world through forgiveness (READ 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)
 - c. However, just as Absalom ultimately rejected David's willingness to reconcile (as we'll see next), many in the world reject God's offer of reconciliation by rejecting Christ

C. Absalom conspires against David (15:1-6)

1. Just days before David forgave Absalom and allowed him back into his presence, Absalom was bemoaning the fact that David hadn't welcomed him home with open arms, and demanded an audience with the king
2. When David finally forgave him and welcomed him back into his presence, we would expect Absalom to be rejoicing and thanking David for his grace and mercy
3. Instead, he immediately goes out and starts conspiring against David to take over his throne:
 - a. He creates a royal entourage for himself (READ 15:1)
 - b. Then, every day he would stand near the city gate and intercept people who were coming to King David for legal help, tell them that the king was too busy to hear their case, and that they would get better treatment if he were king (READ 2-4)
 - c. For four years (v. 7) he flattered the people and continued to deceive them until he had stolen the hearts of the people from David (5-6)
4. Unfortunately, this reflects something else we see when it comes to the Gospel:
 - a. So many demand the Lord accept them and feel they have the right to be in His presence
 - b. Yet, when He offers them a way to be reconciled with Him they reject His offer and conspire against Him
 - c. Romans 1 says that they suppress the truth about God, do not honor Him or give Him thanks, but become futile in their speculations, become fools, exchange the truth of God for a lie and ultimately shake their fist at him by engaging in and celebrating all sorts of wickedness
 - d. Ultimately, they will pay the price for doing so just as Absalom ultimately paid the price for his actions (his death later in 2 Samuel)

Conclusion

1. Sin creates alienation—between us and God and between us and other people
2. God desires reconciliation—between us and Him and between us and others (especially other believers)
3. In order for reconciliation to happen, someone has to make a way—God did for us and we should for others (we need to initiate it)
4. Not everyone will accept an offer of reconciliation—some reject God's offer and some will reject ours
5. But, in spite of rejection, God never closes the door nor should we