

Introduction

1. Last week, we learned how David not only forgave his son Absalom for killing his brother Amnon, but welcomed him back into his presence
2. Unfortunately, we also learned that Absalom's response to such mercy and kindness was to conspire against David as he laid the foundation to over-throw him as king
3. In the first six verses of our passage today we see Absalom initiate the final step in his plot which ultimately forces David to flee for his life (**READ 7-12**)
4. The bulk of our time today will be spent in 15:13-16:14 where we see seven different encounters between David and others on his flight out of Jerusalem
5. Each of these encounters has something to teach us either about David and how he reflects Jesus Christ, or about God in general
6. Because we are coving so much ground today, I will cover part of it this week and part of it next week

A. David's encounter with his servants (READ 15:13-18)

1. For the first time since he became king, David fears for his life and the lives of his household:
 - a. The **"men of Israel"** most likely refers to the Israel's army, many of whom were now loyal to Absalom
 - b. We learn later in v. 37 that Absalom and the army are headed toward Jerusalem
 - c. Only 600 hundred soldiers remain loyal to David:
 - 1) These are listed as Cherethites, Pelethites and Gittites which indicates they were Philistines
 - 2) They had come back with David from Gath when he was living in Ziklag in exile
 - 3) They appear to be the same 600 men who fought with David when he was on the run from Saul, and the same men who remain by his side through all three of the coup attempts (Absalom, Sheba, Adonijah)
 - 4) Even though they were likely the elite of the elite, they would be no match against Israel's army
2. So, David gathers his family, servants and the 600 men and flees the city:
 - a. He was afraid that his household (family and servants) would be in danger
 - b. He was afraid that the city itself would come under attack, and likely endanger its residents
3. One of the things we learn through this encounter is that in spite of his fear, David felt an obligation to protect those whom God had placed in his care:
 - a. In fact, it appears David was the last of the group to leave the city
 - b. V. 18 says that when they stopped at the last house before leaving the city the groups **"passed on beside him"**
 - c. Vs. 23 and 24 suggests David crossed over the brook Kidron after the people
 - d. Does this you remind you of anything our Savior said the night before His crucifixion? **READ John 17:6-12**

B. David's encounter with Ittai (READ 15:19-23)

1. Ittai was a Gittite which means he was a Philistine:
 - a. According to v. 20, he arrived in Jerusalem just the day before (possibly with his brothers)
 - b. We aren't told what brought him to Jerusalem or into David's inner circle
 - c. However, his reference to Yahweh in v. 21 suggests he might have been a Jewish convert
 - d. It's also possible he might have known some of the other 600 Philistine soldiers, or met David when he was living in Gath

2. When David sees Ittai, he tries to convince him to go back to Jerusalem:
 - a. He refers to him as a "**foreigner and also an exile**"—which is essentially saying that he has no stake in this fight and no allegiance to David
 - b. David felt it was unfair to make Ittai "**wander**" around with him in the wilderness facing danger, when he could return back home in peace with his brothers
 - c. But, in a remarkable display of loyalty and devotion, Ittai refuses to return home:
 - 1) He commits himself to serve David "**whether for death or for life**"
 - 2) He later commands 1/3 of David's army against Absalom (18:2)

3. One of the things that stands out to me in this encounter is David's commitment to put the needs of others above his own:
 - a. He needed every able-bodied soldier he could get his hands on, yet he was willing to send Ittai home because he didn't believe he was obligated to help
 - b. Isn't this the essence of the Christian life—Jesus put our needs above His own and calls on us to now do the same (**READ Philippians 2:1-8**)

C. David's encounter with Zadok (READ 15:24-29)

1. The text doesn't tell us why Zadok and the Levites were following David out of the city with the Ark:
 - a. It might have been out of fear for the safety of the Ark
 - b. However, it's more likely because of their belief that David was the rightful king and the Ark should remain with him, no matter where he was
 - c. They were extremely loyal to David (as seen later in our passage), likely because of how he protected them after Saul had 85 priests killed (1 Samuel 22:23)

2. Amazingly, when David sees Zadok and the Levites getting ready to cross the Kidron with the Ark, he sends them back to Jerusalem:
 - a. This seems like a counter-intuitive move because the Ark represented the presence of the LORD and why wouldn't David want that?
 - b. When David moved the Ark to Jerusalem, he saw it as the fulfillment of divine prophecy because that's where God determined He would cause His name to rest (1 Kings 11:36)
 - c. As such, he believed the Ark should remain in Jerusalem, even if he couldn't
 - d. In fact, he believed that whether or not he would ever see the Ark again and experience the presence of God ("**His habitation**") was totally dependent on the LORD's will and whether or not he found favor in God's eyes (REREAD 25-26)
 - 1) Implicit in his words is a keen understanding that being driven out of Jerusalem and away from the Ark could very well be the result of the Lord's displeasure with him—he wasn't so arrogant or proud to dismiss this possibility

- 2) After all, the LORD warned David about the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah, and these included violence from within his own household—that certainly describes the current events
 - 3) Now, as readers with hindsight, we know something David doesn't know at this point—this isn't the LORD's judgment against him and the LORD will not only deliver him from Absalom but return him to Jerusalem
 - 4) But David doesn't know that, yet he submits himself to whatever the Lord will do
3. So, the take away for me from this encounter is just that—David's commitment to accept the LORD's will:
 - a. I think this is hard for us sometimes; I know it is for me
 - b. I'm not always content when things don't turn out the way I want, or I don't understand why God has allowed this or that to happen
 - c. I especially don't like thinking that maybe whatever I'm facing is the LORD's chastening
 - d. It's at times like this that Christ's example can serve us well (**READ Matthew 26:36-46**)

D. David's encounter with the Lord and Hushai (15:30-37)
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** There are two encounters in this section

1. In the first is in vs. 30-31 where David prays to the LORD (READ 30-31):
 - a. Ahithophel was one of David's closest advisors, and according to 16:23 his counsel was often regarded as if it had come directly from God
 - b. He also happened to be the grandfather of Bathsheba, which may explain some things:
 - 1) He was quick to join Absalom's conspiracy against David (see 15:12)
 - 2) He sought to kill David himself (READ 2 Samuel 17:1-3)
 - c. So, when David learns that Ahithophel was now advising Absalom, he prayed for the LORD to "**make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness**" (31b)
 - d. If the pre-script to Psalm 3 is correct (it was added by scribes), then we have some insight into what else David prayed at this time (READ)
2. The second encounter in this section is in vs. 32-37, and it's actually an answer to David's prayer (READ 32-37):
 - a. Hushai was also one of David's advisors and there must have been a special bond between them because he is identified as David's friend four times in this book (15:37; 16:16-17) and once in 1 Chronicles (27:33)
 - b. When David first sees Hushai, he realizes he would be of more use to him serving as a spy among Absalom's counselors, and could be the one to thwart Ahithophel's counsel
 - c. He could also report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests what he learns and they could report it to David
3. The thing that stands out to me with these two encounters is how quickly and directly the LORD answered David's prayer:
 - a. He prayed for the LORD to thwart Ahithophel's counsel and moments later Hushai shows up
 - b. We learn later in chapter 16 that Hushai does just what David asked of him, and the LORD uses him to convince Absalom to reject Ahithophel's very first words of advice, and this ultimately leads to saving David's life

- c. One of the things that the Bible assures us of is that the LORD hears and acts on behalf of our prayers:
 - 1) Listen to David's words from Psalm 5:1-3; when he prayed, he watched for God to answer (READ)
 - 2) He reminds us in Psalm 34:15 that **"The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry."**
 - 3) James repeats this sentiment when he wrote, **"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective"** (James 5:16)
 - 4) We may not always get exactly what we pray for, but we can be assured that the LORD hears us and will act on our behalf and in accordance with His will (1 John 5:14-15): **"14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."**

E. David's encounter with Ziba (READ 16:1-4)
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1. Just after David crosses over the top (summit) of Mt. Olives (about three miles outside the city), he is greeted by Ziba, the one David put in charge of caring for Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth (back in chapter 9)
2. Ziba arrives with a ton of provisions—enough to feed all or most of David's entourage:
 - a. 200 loaves of bread
 - b. 100 clusters of raisins
 - c. 100 summer fruits (or possibly 100 baskets): would have included things like apples, bananas, cherries, grapes, lemons, mangoes, melons, peaches, pears, nectarines, watermelon
 - d. A jug or skin of wine
 - e. Donkey's—most translations refer to only a **"pair"** or **"couple"** of donkeys but that likely refers only to those transporting the food; Ziba's comments in v. 2 suggest there were enough donkeys for the king's household to ride
3. We learn in vs. 3-4, and later in 19:24-30, that Ziba may have had ulterior motives in providing the supplies to David—when asked by David where Mephibosheth was, Ziba states that he stayed behind in Jerusalem claiming that the LORD was restoring the kingdom to him, but later Mephibosheth claims that Ziba had deceived him, left without him, and then slandered him by lying to David
4. One take away for us from this encounter is to see how it represents the LORD's provision for David:
 - a. David and his group left Jerusalem in haste, with barely enough time to escape with the clothes on their back, let alone food, but God met their needs
 - b. It's interesting the number of times we see the LORD provide food for His people in the Bible:
 - 1) He provided manna, quail and water for 40 years for Israel when they wandered in the wilderness during the Exodus (Deuteronomy 2:7)
 - 2) He provided Elijah with cake baked on coals and water to drink (1 Kings 19:6)
 - 3) He provided the prophet's widow and her son with oil and flour to make bread (2 Kings 4:6)
 - 4) He provided food for David and his men on two other occasions:

- a) At Nob when they were fleeing Saul (the consecrated bread from the priests; 1 Samuel 21)
 - b) In 2 Samuel 17:27-29 before the battle with Absalom
- 5) We even see it in the NT when Jesus fed the 4000 and the 5000
 - 6) Each one of these serves as an example of God's provision, not just for food but for everything we need
 - 7) This is why Paul, who lived in constant dependence on the Lord to provide for his needs, could write so confidently to the Philippians about God's ability to meet all their needs (READ Philippians 4:19)
 - 8) It's the reason Jesus told His disciples, and ultimately us, not to worry about anything we need (READ Matthew 6:25-34)

F. David's encounter with Shimei (16:5-14)
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1. David's final encounter is certainly the weirdest (READ 5-8):
 - a. When David arrives at the small village of Bahurim, some crazy dude named Shimei, from the house of Saul, shows up and starts cursing David:
 - 1) He starts pelting him and his servants with stones and dust, and David's mighty men have to take up positions around him and his servants to protect them
 - 2) He screams at him to leave: "**Get out, get out**"
 - 3) He calls him a "**man of bloodshed**" and "**worthless fellow**":
 - a) When God referred to David as someone who "shed much blood" in 1 Chronicles 22:8, he was referring to David being a man of war
 - b) Here, man of bloodshed is a synonym for murderer and as we see in v. 8 Shimei is accusing David of murder against Saul's family (a false claim since there is no record of David murdering any of Saul's family)
 - 4) And, finally he claims that the situation with Absalom is God's punishment against David
 - b. Abishai's response is to ask David's permission to attack Shimei and cut off his head (READ 9)
2. David, however, responds quite differently (READ 9-14):
 - a. His first response is essentially, "Maybe the LORD told him to curse me, and if so, why should I tell him to stop?"
 - b. His second response is essentially, "My son Absalom is trying to kill me; is it any worse that this dude is trying to as well? Go ahead; let him curse me because the LORD has told him to do it."
 - c. His final response is essentially, "Maybe the LORD will have compassion on me and return good to me in place of this guy's cursing"
 - d. Do you recognize the foreshadowing here? Just as David faced the unwarranted persecution and abuse of Shimei, Jesus faced persecution and abuse at the hands of those He came to save
 - e. Does David's attitude here remind you of anything Jesus told His disciples? (**READ Matthew 5:11-12**)

Conclusion

1. In David's encounter with his servants we saw that in spite of the threat to his own life, he protected those around him, which reflects Jesus' care and protection for His disciples, us
2. In his encounter with Ittai we saw that David put the needs of others above his own, just as Christ put our needs above His own
3. In his encounter with Zadok the priest we saw David's commitment to God's will, which we also saw in Christ when He submitted Himself to the LORD's will at the Cross
4. In his encounter with the Lord and Hushai we saw the LORD's willingness to answer David's prayer
5. In his encounter with Ziba, we saw how the Lord provides for the needs of His people
6. In his final encounter with Shimei we saw how David handled unwarranted abuse and persecution, and how his response reflected that of our Savior's