

Day 310 - MONDAY: December 11th

2 Samuel 14

2 Samuel 14:1-33 NKJV

So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom. And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. Go to the king and speak to him in this manner." So Joab put the words in her mouth. And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, "Help, O king!" Then the king said to her, "What troubles you?" And she answered, "Indeed I am a widow, my husband is dead. Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and there was no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.' So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the earth." Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you." And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord, O king, let the iniquity be on me and on my father's house, and the king and his throne be guiltless." So the king said, "Whoever says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you anymore." Then she said, "Please let the king remember the LORD your God, and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son." And he said, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground." Therefore the woman said, "Please, let your maidservant speak another word to my lord the king." And he said, "Say on." So the woman said: "Why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty, in that the king does not bring his

banished one home again. For we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him. Now therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. And your maidservant said, 'I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant. For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the inheritance of God.' Your maidservant said, 'The word of my lord the king will now be comforting; for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king in discerning good and evil. And may the LORD your God be with you.' " Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you." And the woman said, "Please, let my lord the king speak." So the king said, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?" And the woman answered and said, "As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. For your servant Joab commanded me, and he put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant. To bring about this change of affairs your servant Joab has done this thing; but my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that is in the earth." And the king said to Joab, "All right, I have granted this thing. Go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom." Then Joab fell to the ground on his face and bowed himself, and thanked the king. And Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord, O king, in that the king has fulfilled the request of his servant." So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, "Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face." So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face. Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he cut the hair of his head—at the end of every year he cut it because it was heavy on him—when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king's standard. To Absalom were born

three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful appearance. And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face. Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come. So he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose and came to Absalom's house, and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" And Absalom answered Joab, "Look, I sent to you, saying, 'Come here, so that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still." ' Now therefore, let me see the king's face; but if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me." So Joab went to the king and told him. And when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king. Then the king kissed Absalom.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Absalom certainly didn't grow up in a good family situation. Remember, David had six sons by six different women in seven and a half years (see 2 Samuel 3:2-5; 2 Samuel 5:5), of whom Absalom was the third. The marriage of his mother, Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur, to David was undoubtedly a political one, and thus there was probably little love involved in it. This was far from ideal for God intended the stable home environment of a loving, monogamous marriage to produce godly offspring (see Malachi 2:15). But sadly, Absalom and his other siblings have been denied this. This is not to say that people cannot overcome an adverse family situation, as a number of biblical heroes did. It is just to point out that those in such circumstances begin with a disadvantage. Furthermore, it appears that David was rarely home while his earlier children were growing up. Instead, he was away fighting wars (compare 2 Samuel 3-10). This is not stated to condemn David, as these wars carved out the

empire God intended Israel to attain. Rather, it is to help us understand the added difficulty Absalom and David's other earlier children had while growing up. And it should also serve as a lesson that a person can be righteous and still need to work on properly balancing work and family responsibilities.

It should also be pointed out that Absalom was a teenager when David committed his terrible sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. How disillusioning this must have been for the boy. His father, the righteous king and great hero, reduced to this. David's actions surely left an impression on his children. Furthermore, besides the natural consequences all of these factors might have produced on their own, God's punishment of turmoil as a consequence of David's sin is now directly at work in David's family. Amnon's character was probably, in part, a result of the same upbringing Absalom experienced. The weaknesses in both of David's sons played a part in the awful circumstances of our previous reading—and the continuing turmoil that God had foretold.

In his longing to see Absalom (2 Samuel 13:39), David perhaps thought about some of the mistakes he had made as a father. He probably couldn't help but realize the fact that his own sin of adultery and murder was, at least in part, responsible for what was happening.

Joab, perhaps viewing the king's distraction over the matter as a threat to national security, devises a scheme to get David to reexamine the whole situation and reestablish a relationship with his son. He sends a woman to tell the king a supposedly parallel story—as Nathan had done earlier following David's sin with Bathsheba. Yet this story is only partially parallel: "The fictitious story does not fit Absalom's case, which involved premeditated murder with known hostile intent (2 Samuel 13:32). David could only have responded as he did because he wanted his son to return so badly (cf. vv. 37-39)" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on 14:1-4).

However, there may have been a mitigating circumstance in Absalom's killing of Amnon that David could have considered, though it isn't stated in the account. God equated rape with murder--“for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter” (Deuteronomy 22:26). Though rape in this verse is that of an engaged or married woman, the rape of a sister, who could not legally marry her guilty brother, was surely just as heinous. Indeed, both crimes merited the death penalty. Had Amnon *murdered* Tamar, Absalom could have, according to the law, pursued and killed him as the "avenger of blood." Perhaps there was some justification, then, for avenging something that was evidently *on par* with murder. Moreover, David may have come to reason that he should have personally ordered Amnon put to death—and that Absalom was justified for doing what he did upon David's own failure to act.

In any case, David acquiesces to Joab's wish to have Absalom brought back. However, the king refuses to see his son face to face for another two years. Perhaps he cannot break through the barrier of resentment that has built up over the killing of Amnon. Yet this just serves to further fuel Absalom's growing resentment. For consider how atrocious this is from the young man's perspective. First, his father would not punish Amnon for defiling his sister. Then, he is not allowed to see his father for three years. When his father at last sends for him to come back, he still refuses to see him for two more years, which must have been humiliating. It is apparently during these five years that Absalom's children are born, some at Jerusalem. And yet David will not even deign to visit his own grandchildren. Worse, it may even be that some of Absalom's sons die in infancy during this period—as we later see a declaration from him that he has no sons (2 Samuel 18:18)—and yet David still won't come to see Absalom, and neither will he allow Absalom to see him.

Absalom finally presses Joab into intervening, which results in a meeting at last between David and his son—Absalom bowing his head to the ground and the king kissing him. "The kiss was the symbol of their reconciliation. Although David and Absalom were reconciled, the seeds of bitterness that had been sown would soon bear the fruit of conspiracy and rebellion. David's protracted delay in coming to terms with his son ultimately led to disaster. For the moment, though, there was peace" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 14:33).

The Scriptures tell us that it is always best to resolve our differences and not let them drag on. There is no other way out. If an offense occurs, both parties should seek settlement and reconciliation. One of David's major faults was that of not addressing family problems head on, along with not spending the time to guide, direct and correct his children in a timely manner. David, a man after God's own heart, was by no means an evil person. Rather, like all of us, he made mistakes—and those mistakes had serious consequences." [END]

Verse 26 – John Gill says that the weight of his hair would be about 100 ounces (or 6.25 pounds).