

Bringing Back the King II Sam. 19:9-12

.⁹ Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, “The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. ¹⁰ But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?”¹¹ So King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, “Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, ‘Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his very house? ¹² You are my brethren, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?’

Revival has as its purpose to restore us to our full purpose in Christ. When genuine revival comes then we will more fully enter into what it means to “Glorify God and enjoy Him.” Tonight we want to look at why we sometimes don’t reflect that Glory as we should. Would you agree that sometimes our reflection of God’s Glory leaves much to be desired? Well, why is this true?

I want to use an O.T. story to reveal a NT truth tonight. I call it “A New Testament fire in an Old Testament forest.” The title of tonight’s message is *“Bringing Back the King:”* and comes from the life of King David. Of all the notable men of the Old Testament, none have so fully bared their heart as King David. His Psalms are so often autobiographical and reflect the heights of elation and the depths of desolation which was part of his life experience. But there is no story as poignant as his flight from the throne before Absalom, his favorite son (II Sam. 15). From this story we can draw lessons which relate to David’s greater Son – the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. The Cause of the King’s Absence.

a. Why was David no longer on the throne? This can be reduced to two things:

i. There was an attitude of complacency with regard to the King’s reign.

1. David was growing old; his reign had lost the dynamic force of former years when he was almost idolized by the people. The glamour of former victories had been forgotten. His conquest of Goliath was but a tale told often around the evening fireplace. The aging King was unable to devote the same amount of time and attention to hearing and settling grievances of the people, consequently his value to the people was diminished.
2. The memory of the public is notoriously short. Cf. Churchill in England. One day during WW II he was a national hero, but in a short time afterwards they voted him out of office. One day they cry “all hail” to Jesus. The next day they cry “crucify him.” Look at what happened

immediately after 911. Flags were flying everywhere. Our church at FBC Winter Park was full for a couple of weeks, but before long it was back to business as usual.

ii. There was an attitude of competition with regards to the Kings reign.

Absalom was quick to exploit his Father's waning popularity. He was swift to take advantage of this attitude of complacency. *"Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice."* (II Sam. 15:4) Absalom had grown proud and head strong. He ingratiated himself with the people. He stole the hearts of the men of Israel. The result of this was that after four years of subversion, David was driven into exile. David didn't forsake them, they forsook him.

1. But David rallied his loyal forces and decisively defeated Absalom and his followers. In the course of the battle, and contrary to David's instructions, Absalom was killed.
2. The nation went into confusion. Absalom had promised so much and delivered so little. II Sam. 19:9, 10 takes up here. *"⁹ Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, 'The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. ¹⁰ But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?'"*
3. The new King is dead, and the old king is in humiliating exile. Their hearts were smitten with their ingratitude and once again their minds turned to their old hero King David.

iii. Why was David absent? Because of the rebellion of his people.

1. This is a striking parallel between David and Christ. Like David, our Lord too has His rightful Kingdom. Note the way the Bible attaches salvation passages with sovereignty passages. *"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord...."* (Rom. 10:9,10) (Acts. 2:36 *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that that you have crucified the Lord of glory"*) But in so many lives Jesus is not ruling as our King for two reasons:
 - a. Sin- I Pet. 3:18. Like the people who ran David off his throne because of their sin and selfishness, so we have sought to dethrone Christ for the same reasons. Scripture says *"you cannot serve God and mammon."* He does not share His throne with anyone or anything.

b. **Self-** John 12:24; Gal. 2:20; Luke 9:23 Poem: *“There is a foe whose hidden power the Christian well may fear...Oh, to be free...”*

2. Let me ask you, **“Is Christ on the undisputed throne of your life, or has your sin resulted in His exile from ruling your life?”** The cause of King David’s absence was **rebellion caused by complacency and competition**. Does Jesus find apathy in your heart? Does he find competition from the world, flesh and the devil?”

a. (In England we went to Buckingham and were told that when the Queen is there the flag will be flying.) Is that flag flying over your heart tonight?

b. Spurgeon was right when he said that *“People love God everywhere except on the throne.”* In fact, the most lifeless word in the Christians vocabulary today often is the word “Lord.” The Bible asks this important question: *“Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and then not do what I say?”*

i. It is inadequate

ii. It is inconsistent

iii. It is incorrect

II. From (The Cause to) the Complications of the King’s Absence.

a. When the King is not reigning, there will be a **Sense of Dissatisfaction**.

⁹ Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, “The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom (II Sam. 19:9)

i. The people recalled with a great sense of nostalgia the days of David’s glory.

ii. Now that David was not on the throne all seemed empty and flat. The absence of David meant the presence of strife and frustration.

iii. When Christ is not ruling from the throne of our heart *prayer becomes a ponderous necessity and Bible study becomes boring*. There is restlessness about life.

iv. Amos the prophet spoke of this very thing?

1. *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God,*

“That I will send a famine on the land,

Not a famine of bread,

Nor a thirst for water,

But of hearing the words of the Lord.

¹² They shall wander from sea to sea,

And from north to east;

They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord,

But shall not find it.

2. Here he describes Restless Frustration.
 - a. "Wander" means to "stagger". It pictures those who are fatigued in their search with no results.
 - b. They run from place to place and man to man: Eastern mysticism, then Christian Science, then Joel Osteen, then Oprah Winfrey. Surely Dr. Oz or Dr. Phil has the answer to my restless frustration!
 3. Jesus said "Seek and you shall find." (Matt. 7:7) Why did these folks not "find?" Because of their idolatry. It is empty to seek a word from the Lord while living in idolatry.
 4. Notice in Amos text that they went everywhere EXCEPT SOUTH, for it was there that they would have found the Temple which represented the true worship of the true God.
- v. John Newton, former slave trader, wrote the song *Amazing Grace*. After he was gloriously converted to Christ wrote: "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? Where is the soul – refreshing view of Jesus and His Word?" This was one of the greatest Christians of his generation yet he is speaking of losing the blessedness of living under His Lordship.
 - vi. It was dissatisfaction and disillusionment that drove the people to bring back King David and reaffirm his kingship.
 - vii. Perhaps that is why our Lord loves us so much that he allows dissatisfaction and disillusionment to be part of our life experience to drive us back to Himself. Listen to the Psalmist: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but NOW I have kept Thy word It is a good thing that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes." (Psm. 119:67, 71) –
- b. When the King is not reigning, there will be not only a sense of dissatisfaction, but also Disregard for the King's Honor.
 - i. They formerly would have died for the honor of David. They were prepared to sacrifice their own comforts and interest in order to further his cause ¹⁵ And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" ¹⁶ So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the Lord. ¹⁷ And he said, "Far be it from me, O Lord, that I should do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men. (II Sam 23:15-17)
 - ii. In those days even his wish was their command. Remember when it was like that with your relationship with your Lord Jesus?

- iii. But all this had changed after Absalom. Love for David had waned and allegiance had been transferred to Absalom. David's honor was no longer a priority in their lives.
- iv. *Modern theology has lost the wonder and honor due to God. Most is man centered not God centered. Progressive theologians tell us that God is learning from His mistakes and would rule this world better, but He just can't do anything about it. This so-called theology has gutted God and created an emasculated deity that is neither omnipotent nor omniscient.*
- v. Like the Ephesian church, we have left our first love and the honeymoon is over. Rev. 2:1-4
 - 1. When this happens, we are less cautious about our language when He is not on the throne.
 - 2. When this happens, we are not as concerned about avoiding the very appearance of evil when the King is not reigning.
- c. When the King is not reigning, there will not only be a sense of dissatisfaction and disregard for the King's honor, but there will also be an Indifference to the Kings Favor.
 - i. One of the great signs of the need of revival is when there is a great Indifference to worship of God. We see this in **Amos 8:5**, *"When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat?"*
 - 1. They re saying, *"When will this preacher be through so we can get down to the important things?"*
 - 2. Remember what Tozier said: *"The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of wrong thoughts about God."*
 - 3. Their shallow worship in no way affected their lives. One British preacher summed it up when he wrote: *"Things have come to a pretty place when religion is allowed to interfere with our private lives."*
 - ii. Can you remember when it was a great joy and blessing to your heart to spend time in the presence of our Lord Jesus? Can you remember when His favor meant more to you than anything else? When even the appearance of sin troubled your conscience.
 - 1. In those days distance was intolerable. You were an instant confessor. If you sinned, it was in the next breath that you confessed. Perhaps that is not so today? Why? Have you become indifferent to the King's favor?
 - iii. My favorite Abraham Kuyper quotation comes from a speech that he once gave before a university audience in Amsterdam. He was arguing that scholarship is an important form of Christian discipleship. Since scholarship deals with God's world, it has to be done in such a way that it honors Christ. Kuyper concluded with this ringing proclamation: *"There is not one square inch of the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry out,*

'This is mine! This belongs to me!'" With this as our theology, how can we be indifferent to our Lord's reign?

- iv. Queen Victoria of England was a firm believer in the return of Christ as King. *On one occasion she said to Dean Farrar, "Oh, how I wish the Lord would come during my lifetime! "And why your majesty? He asked. "Because I should love to lay my crown at His feet." To her, Christ was not only Savior, but Sovereign."*

III. Now let's turn from the Cause and Complications of His absence to The Conditions of the King's Return.

- a. (David longed to return, but in spite of his desire, he was not prepared to return unconditionally.) It was not sufficient that his people should regret their disloyalty and defection. Before he would return, certain things had to be put right. The same is true in the parallel relationship we have with King Jesus. *The three essential conditions for the King's return then and now to reign were:*

b. An Undivided Kingdom.

- i. Jealousy and division had separated Judah and Israel and to David's dismay, it was Israel, not Judah, which had been first to speak of bringing him back. Judah, his first love, and his own kin had made no move to secure his return.
- ii. Christ has the same rights of Kinship and Kingship. He must see an end to the civil war of the soul. He will not consent to rule over a divided Kingdom. Listen to his poignant plea: *"You are my brethren; you are my bones and my flesh, wherefore then are you the last to bring back the king?"* (II Sam. 19:12)
- iii. A.W. Tozer says that people who are crucified with Christ have three distinct marks:
 - 1. They are facing only one direction,
 - 2. They can never turn back, and
 - 3. They no longer have plans of their own.

c. Not only an undivided Kingdom, but also A Unanimous Request.

- i. *¹² You are my brethren; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' ¹³ And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.'"¹⁴ So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!"¹⁵ Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan. (II Sam. 19:12-15)*
- ii. David refused to force himself on a reluctant people. Cf. Rev. 3:20 *"If any man will open the door" Jesus does not ram the door down!!*

- iii. It was gracious of the rejected King to respond so readily after such ingratitude shown to him. He would have been perfectly justified in ordering every one of those who rebelled against him to be executed. Thank God He is a merciful and forgiving God.
 - iv. Could we tonight rise up with one voice and say “*We want Jesus to be our King!*”
 - v. Someone once wrote and asked Emily Post, the etiquette expert of another generation, “*What is the correct procedure when one is invited to the White House but has a previous engagement?*” Replied Post, “*An invitation to dine at the White House is a command, and it automatically cancels any other engagement.*”
 - vi. Jesus, our commander in chief offers us this incredible invitation: “*Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*” Will you dare turn it down?
- d. Finally, not only an undivided kingdom and a unanimous request, but if we want the King back on His throne there must be An Uncompromising Allegiance.
- i. And there happened to be there a rebel,^[a] whose name was Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said: “We have no share in David, Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse; Every man to his tents, O Israel!”² So every man of Israel deserted David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king. (20:1-2)
 - ii. The leader of the rebellion, Sheba, had to be punished. ²⁰ And Joab answered and said, “Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy! ²¹ That is not so. But a man from the mountains of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has raised his hand against the king, against David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city.” So the woman said to Joab, “Watch, his head will be thrown to you over the wall.”
 - iii. He may have to do something drastic in our lives to terminate our rebellion. If we don’t take initiative in dealing with the wrong in our lives, He will.
 - 1. Matt. 5:29 means we must deal drastically with sin in our lives. “*If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perishes, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*”
 - 2. This is what Jesus means in Luke 9:23 by “*taking up our cross.*” It means living out what it means to put the old man to death and live our of our resurrected life with Jesus. (Gal. 2:20)
 - iv. Notice this; *David did not assume the throne automatically. The people had something to do, and until they did, he would not move.*

- a. *There had to be glad consent of the people for his renewed rule.*
 - b. *There had to be a unanimous request and an uncompromising allegiance.*
- v. Dr. Rogers used to say: *"If you please the Lord it doesn't matter who you displease. And if you displease the Lord, it really doesn't matter who you please."*
- vi. Alan Redpath asks this question: *"What did it take to bring David back? Then he answers: "The unanimous surrender of the people of God to the purpose of David, that was what opened up the way for his return. And what is it going to take to bring Jesus back? Exactly the same and nothing less than that."*
- vii. *II Sam. 19:15 "So the King returned and came to Jordan."* What a change since David had last stood on the banks of this river. Then he was fleeing from Absalom who had captured the hearts of many in Judah, now the rebel was dead, and God had so reinstated David in the affections of the royal tribe, that all men of Judah had sent word unto him *"Return thou and all thy servant's" (v. 14) A. Pink*

Conclusion: Would Jesus say to you: *"Why are you the last to bring back the King?"* Abner spoke words which fittingly climax this chapter. *"You sought in times past for David to be King over you. Now then do it." II Sam. 3:17, 18* Will you speak a word tonight to bring back the King? Call upon Him from the depths of your soul.

*Ye call Me Master and obey me not,
 Ye call Me Light and see me not,
 Ye call Me way and follow me not
 Ye call Me Life and desire me not,
 Ye call Me wise and acknowledge me not,
 Ye call Me fair and love me not,
 Ye call Me rich and ask me not,
 Ye call Me eternal and seek me not,
 Ye call Me gracious and trust me not,
 Ye call Me Noble and serve me not,
 Ye call Me mighty and honor me not,
 Ye call Me just and fear me not,
 If I condemn you, blame me not.*