

**David and Absalom**  
II Samuel 18:31-33,  
Trinity Sunday XII, August 23, 2015

Sermon Text: II Samuel 18:31-33 (KJV),

*“And, behold, Cushy came; and Cushy said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto Cushy, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushy answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”*

Beloved of the Lord.....Sad to say, but all of us have family members whom we love dearly, but they do not believe. And in spite of our words to them and our witness to the sacred truth of Scripture, they shut their ears and heart. Though we know without a doubt our Lord Jesus suffered on the cross to pay for and redeem every single soul from Satan’s power, if they die in unbelief they will be eternally lost. Who can describe the grief of heart a Christian endures when a family member dies without Christ in unbelief? Yet we get a taste of this grief in the words of David today who cried, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son!”

Have you ever wondered or had the thought regarding your spouse, child, or loved one.... would you be willing to suffer hell for them if it meant that they would receive heaven? If you could, would you be willing to make a deal with God and thus pray “Lord, my loved one does not believe You are their Savior and they refuse to confess their sins, yet I know Thy salvation and great mercy Lord. Since I don’t want them to perish eternally I humbly ask you to cast me away to damnation in their place so they can go to heaven. For then even in that place I would have the happiness of knowing they were in heaven.” Would we then be willing to do this, to take that place of our family member?

Yet this is what our Lord Jesus did for each of us and all our family members, when He was our Substitute upon the cross. He hung and suffered for every family member of every nation. And Jesus wanted to do this, and was very willing to suffer our hell, so we would not be cast away, but receive life everlasting in heaven. So Jesus said in John 6:40, “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” These words apply also for all our dear family members, and as long as they live, there is hope. For with God all things are possible. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

Of course it is also written that “no man can by any means redeem his brother.” It is then senseless for us to pray or try to make a deal with God to take the place of a family member because no sinner on earth is able to save another, not even by the sacrifice of self. But thanks be to God *Jesus has suffered for our brother or sister, mother or father,*

son or daughter, and if only they believe they will be justified in God's sight! May God grant repentance to them all! For "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

I. Beware of the devil and his seducing arts. Let us begin today's lesson by first remembering that Absalom was a very handsome man. The Bible says "in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." Though it is contrary to nature, Absalom as a man also had long hair, which seemed to be connected to his vanity. The Bible teaches once a year Absalom had his hair cut, and it weighed six pounds. Of course what we really remember about Absalom is that he wanted to be king instead of his father David. He would sit at the gate of the city and meet and talk with people saying, "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!" He would also have the people kiss his hand (like the pope still does today) "And in this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

This is our first point. Absalom was a seducer who stole the hearts of the people, just as Satan is a seducer who steals hearts away from Christ. How does this happen? When the people took their cause to the king for judgment, Absalom intercepted them and spoke flattering words. He made it sound like he cared for them and was concerned for their welfare, and though he promised justice, this was really a promise of a reward....in other words, "If I were judge I would make sure you would win your case." But this is how the devil works. In many churches today you don't hear anything about your sins or the wrath of God against you. And how often do they teach that by our sins we merit hell, eternal damnation in that lake of fire? Instead there are countless ministers and false Christians who flatter you saying "You are a good person, and God loves you because you are a good person." They flatter you and make you feel warm and fuzzy inside. The devil makes us feel good about ourselves. But the problem is when you forget that you are a rotten miserable sinner, and you think you have many good works to offer God, your faith in Jesus will die because you don't need Him anymore. But if your sins weren't so bad, than why was it that Jesus suffered so horribly on the cross? And if He did suffer so horribly for you, wasn't this necessary if you were to be forgiven? So in order to save us the Bible says, the Father "hath made Jesus *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." You see you can't have it both ways. If you really believe Jesus is your Savior from sin, it also means you were heading to hell without Him. Don't let Satan then rob you of your salvation so that you don't believe you deserve hell for your sins. Jesus either saved you from hell, or He didn't save you at all. Which is it for you and what do you believe? But knowing Jesus suffered hell to take our place it is also written, "He that believeth on Jesus is not condemned."

Still another way the devil seduces us is by slander. Just as Absalom slandered his own father, by implying King David was a poor judge, so the devil will slander our greater Judge, God the Father. How does the devil slander God? Remember what the Serpent said to Eve! Did God really say you will die Eve?....if you eat this fruit? Does that sound reasonable to you? In like manner Satan whispers in our ear today saying, "Do you really deserve hell for your sins? Does one sin committed in a moment of time actually deserve the everlasting wrath and punishment of God? Would God do that? But

the devil slanders God in the other direction also, on the side of the Gospel. Could it really be true that Jesus has paid for all your sins and there is nothing left to do but believe? Do you really think God will pass over your lustful adultery, or that unspeakable deed you have not revealed to anyone, or the blasphemous thoughts of your heart? Will God just let that go for Jesus sake? Truly this is the devil's slander of Christ. But just as the people should not have listened to the slander of Absalom, so you dear Christian should pay no attention to the devil's slander of your Heavenly Father. Just as in the prodigal son the Father daily longed for his son to return so he could happily forgive, so God your Father has done so much more....He gave you His only-begotten Son for your salvation, and Jesus with love endured the cross for your sins. You are forgiven, you are redeemed, and God requires not one drop of blood from you, because "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Perhaps one more quick point about Absalom, worthy of our consideration was his pride and vanity. Here too the devil works. Even if we are handsome or beautiful or gifted in many ways, should we be proud about this? If we are gifted, God gave the gifts. If we are beautiful, God gave the beauty and God can take it away. Remember Absalom. Psalm 138:6 says, "Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off." Whatever earthly beauty we may enjoy, both our face and body will one day die and rot away in the grave because we are sinners. Yet because Christ is our Beautiful Savior, and all true beauty is to be found in Him and His salvation, His beauty is given to us as a royal dress. Even our dead bodies will rise up and be glorified on the Last Day when the trumpet sounds. Absalom is dead, yet Jesus lives.

II. God's judgment of Absalom, and David's loss. Moving on now to God's judgments and the death of Absalom, the day of battle came between Absalom and David and "the rest is history". Riding upon a mule, Absalom's beautiful hair was caught up in an oak tree. And though David had commanded the soldiers not to slay Absalom if he were caught, the general of the army named Joab "took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him." When David heard the news he could hardly contain himself.

Nevertheless this death of Absalom was surely God's judgment and will. From this we learn no man knows the day of his own death, and the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. Trusting in his own power and strength Absalom didn't wake up that last morning of his life, thinking he would die, but he did. I would hope somehow hanging upon that tree for at least a few minutes, Absalom maybe repented, but we don't know and the Bible is silent on that matter. But the point is all of us need to be ready to die in the faith of Jesus Christ, and not put off repentance till tomorrow. Confession and repentance of sin should be daily, but neither saves us, only the blood of Jesus Christ does. Faith in Him and not ourselves is all that is necessary for salvation, because "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Yet the damnation of any soul is not God's will, because Christ died for all and the Lord is not willing that any perish, and this certainly includes every member of our family that does not believe. Thus regarding the judgments of God let us understand this.... Because Jesus already hung upon the cross to pay for all our sins, God's greatest

judgment is this, God has judged all men forgiven, acquitted of all sin. Since the Father made Jesus to be sin for us, though Jesus had no sin, all of God's wrath against us for sin has been completely removed, for it was all consumed by the offering and sacrifice of Christ. In place of wrath God now has peace and forgiveness for all, and the only way any man can lose that salvation is by unbelief. Thus let us all remember First Timothy 4:10. It says "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

This means also Jesus saved those who do not believe, but if they stay in that unbelief they will not receive heaven, not because Jesus didn't earn it or give it, but because they would not have it. Instead of believing and rejoicing in God's Son, Jesus is despised. Therefore concerning our beloved father or mother, son or daughter, brother or sister understand this, as long as they live, there is hope, because Jesus seeks out the lost sheep and the prodigal son. But if they die in unbelief, God cannot be blamed, because Jesus did everything He could to save them, not only by the cross, but also by the Gospel Word preached to them while they lived.

Therefore in closing dearly beloved, I know it is discouraging to have loves ones who do not believe, but let us continue to witness without fear, having faith and knowing God's Word is powerful. Sometimes the lost are found to God's glory, hence the lesson of the prodigal son. Warn them of their sins and the wrath of God, but also share with them the love and mercy of Jesus, explain the reason of His sacrifice on the cross. I would rather go to my grave knowing I preached too much Gospel, rather than too much law. Both are necessary of course, and there can be no conversion without the two being taught, but no sinner can take their sins to Jesus, unless they first hear Jesus truly died to save them from their sins also. Share Jesus with them, pray for them, and trust in God above all things, for God would "have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of truth." Amen.