

When He Sets Your Field Afire

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Chapter 14 this evening. Pastor Jeremiah, thank you for inviting us and having us. We really appreciate it very much. Brother Josh, appreciate you preaching. I really enjoyed that. That was good and all the quotations of MLJ were close to my heart too. I enjoyed the good doctrine. But anyway, we're in 2 Samuel 14 and I'm going to do a time check so I don't get booted out of here, and welcome. Thank you for having us this evening. I wonder if you would go with me and we're in 2 Samuel 14 and we'll begin reading in verse 21.

21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again. 22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant. 23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face. 25 But 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. 26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it: because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight. 27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance. 28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. 29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come. 30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. 31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? 32 And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if

there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me. 33 So Joab came 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: and the king kissed Absalom.

I'd like to read one more time, please, verse 28, 29, 30 and 31.

28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. 29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come. 30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. 31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore [why] have thy servants set my field on fire?

That is the word of the Lord.

So this is the first time I've preached this thing so let's see how it goes, okay? And it's "When God Sets Your Field On Fire." When God sets your field on fire. We have a couple of key players in the passage tonight. We have two and I want to give you a lowdown on Joab if you've not heard of him before. He and his two brothers are sons of a guy named Zeruah and they lived, in fact their family burial plot is in Bethlehem according to chapter 2 of this very same book, and they would engage in dangerous workings, they were basically thugs and they were warcrafters and they were very skilled. Joab and his brother Amasa that you've heard of several times that Abner killed earlier in the book, and then a third brother, and they were always not only picking fights but finishing them for their brothers, and so there's lots of death, lots of murder, lots of war games around pools, in fields, on streets, all the way through this first 13 chapters of this book.

Joab became the head of David's army in chapter 8 of this book. He was a valiant man according to chapter 10 of this book. He didn't become complicit in David's plan to kill another mighty man named Uriah just two or three chapters ago in this very book. Joab made some poor choices but one thing that was not questionable was his loyalty to King David according to chapter 12 of this book. Absalom or rather Joab was a loyal general of David's army and one of the top 30 of David's mighty men, in fact, he was one of the top three in the top three of David's mighty men.

One family member and son named Absalom who will also serve as the second main player in this passage was estranged from his father David. Earlier in the book, just a few chapters ago, we find out that Absalom is estranged from his father David because it looks as though David has favorites. He, for example, going back I'm just going to say that Joab is, Absalom is estranged from his father David and Joab in this chapter is instrumental in reconciling King David with his son Absalom. Absalom is the third son

of David and the first son of David, a man named Amnon, raped his half-sister, Absalom's full sibling, Tamar. So there's some bad blood going on here.

Five years after this rape that takes place in the previous chapter, it becomes obvious to Joab that David missed his third son Absalom who was in exile after killing David's firstborn son, Absalom's half-brother Amnon. And after his restoration to Jerusalem found in this passage, Absalom spends another two years under house arrest, not allowed to see his father, King David, and so he reaches out to Joab, our first main character in this passage, and to no avail seeks to rectify the situation. "It's been five years since this bad stuff happened to my sister. It's been two years since I was brought back to Jerusalem." He reaches out to Joab first, then he reaches out to Joab again both in verse 29 and verse 33 of our passage here, and then we see that he goes to some other other measures to get Joab's attention.

So again, three characters in this passage: David, who is the father of Absalom and the boss or the king of both Joab, his general, and Absalom, his third son. It seems reasonable based on verses 30 and 31 of this passage to draw some connections briefly between Absalom, his servants, the fire, and field near Absalom with you and I, the reader and the listener this evening.

First of all, Absalom. It says in the book of 2 Samuel that Absalom is a son of David. I'd like to take a moment and just say that maybe we can push through Absalom and maybe just talk a little bit about not a son of David named Amnon, and not a son of David named Absalom, but the son of David, Jesus Christ. Eleven times in the book of Matthew, four times in the book of Mark, five times in the book of Luke, and once in the very first chapter of Romans, Jesus is known as the son of David. In this passage tonight, I'd like for you to consider that Jesus Christ is pictured by Absalom only in this regard, and this really is difficult. When we're younger in Scripture and we hear about Old Testament passages being pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ, oftentimes we look for it to be a perfect match as if it's a mirror touching a mirror, but the problem is that if there was any perfect picture of Jesus in the Old Testament, that would actually [unintelligible] for Jesus in the New Testament. So we're actually expecting for it to be an imperfect picture and Absalom is an imperfect picture.

There are problems with Absalom but in this passage I think you're going to see that Absalom is a picture of the very perfect and sinless son of David, who according to Matthew 1, is the son of David through foster, or if you want to call it step-fatherhood through Joseph, the son of Solomon, the son of David, whereas in Luke's genealogy it could be argued that Jesus is the son of David through Nathan and then his mother, Mary, who is a descendant of Nathan, the son of David. It is without question Jesus is the son of David.

We talk about Absalom, now what else do we see in this passage? We see that Absalom according to our passage in verse 30 has some servants. Now we are not a bit, we're not having any issues seeing the parallels here. When we think about how Jesus in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:24-42 gives a parable about there being wheat and

tares, the wicked one has sown the tares among the wheat which are the pure children of God in the kingdom of God, and it says that the servants of the vinedresser, the servants of the householder said, "Master, should we at this time go and pull the tares?" And the master, who is picturing our Lord Jesus Christ, said to his servants, "Wait until the end of the harvest lest you pick up the wheat when you pull the tares." And so we find in the book of Matthew 13 that our Lord Jesus Christ also has servants and they are angels according to verse 43, at the end of the world the angels will be sent forth to harvest those from the field which according to Matthew 13 is the world.

So here we have in this passage a picture, a son of David has servants, they're sent forth on errands. Certainly I'm not trying to say that this is a picture of the parable of the sower. What I am saying is that it is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who unless he's changed has servants and they're angels. I mean, we just have to think about Matthew 24 where it says in verse 30 that at the sound of the trumpet he will send forth his angels to every corner to gather his elect, or to Matthew 27 where he says to Peter, "Peter, put up your sword. Do you not know that I could address my Father at this very moment and call 12 legions of angels?" Mark it down, if you will, the Lord has many messengers. The son of David has many servants and they are messengers.

We've talked about Absalom and we've talked about he's a picture of the son of David. We've talked about Absalom's servants being sent out as errands from him. And we've talked about Jesus having angelic messengers, having messengers that go out and do his bidding. Let's talk, thirdly, about fire. It seems as though fire got Joab's attention in this passage. It seems as though Joab was not interested in hearing the invitation. It seems as though Joab was unreachable, untouchable, the phone was ringing and he saw called ID. I remember back when you had to pay extra for called ID, I think 1997 or so, maybe '98. We moved to Bowling Green as newlyweds and we paid an extra, I think, \$2.99 for that extra component, you could see who's calling me. That was back when you could learn to *69 to find that jerk that just prank called you and you're going to help them out by identifying them right there on the phone. Those are blessed times, aren't they? You could actually get away with a prank call. No more can you do that.

But anyways, it was a time and I want to make the parallel here regarding fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15 says that there is a certain class of Christians who are saved yet so as by fire. I think this follows well with our previous sermon where we're finding out that there are some things so bodacious, so crazy, so errant in the life of some backslidden believers that only fire will get their attention. As a matter of fact, there appears to be such extreme measures in place that only fire will save some believers. Only fire. 1 Peter 1:7 says that our temptation testing us and purifying us through fire is a wonderful precious thing, so precious that 1 Peter uses that word "precious" to describe only one other thing in the entire epistle and it is the precious blood of Christ. Think about it. Your trial that appears to be so fiery is just as, it seems, precious as the blood of Christ that made it possible for you to be rescued with that fiery temptation.

In this story, there was only certain things that would get Joab's attention and in our lives, believer, there are some things that are so crazy, we're so dull of hearing, so blind to what

is true, we seem to be so sinful, we seem so backslidden we can be preaching a sermon and have our hearts so far from God, we could be standing and thinking about how much somebody else really needed to be here to hear this, and we can be thinking about how God really ripped me off putting me in the place I'm in, doing what I'm doing, and how he would do better if he might put me up for a free agency, "Oh, how God has a favor of me serving him," and we don't even realize that we're so not hearing his voice. He sends after us once, we don't hear. He sends after us twice, we don't hear. So what does he do? He does like Absalom in this story and he saves us with fire. He keeps us from going so far that if it were possible we would fall away and be impossibly, it would be impossible to renew us again, seeing that we crucify the Son of God afresh and put him to open shame. We would shipwreck our faith, 1 Timothy says, if it were not for the fire that he lights our field with. Friends, I'm talking about Galatians 5:4 says some of us would even fall from grace. 2 Peter 2 says some of us would know the way of escape and turn back. The Bible says in Proverbs 26:11, some of us like dogs would eat our vomit and like pigs would wallow in our mire if he didn't save us with some fire and keep us from going too far.

Now I do know that I've got to balance this a little bit with some 1 Corinthians 10:13. Verse 12 says, I know you heard about the fornicators back in the Old Testament and you probably think you're past that but the Scripture says in verse 12, "For him who thinks he stands, you'd better take heed lest ye fall. There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." Friends, think about it. The common sins available in the world today, you don't even have to be ingenious or creative or innovative anymore to find your sin, and yet Paul says whatever is common to this world, you can fall to it, 1 Corinthians 10:12 says. "Oh, I would never do that. [unintelligible]." Oh, listen to me, the Lord has a different script for every believer and he might let you swim in that sewage for a while, you might think that you're going to find a septic tank biscuit somewhere but the reality is God's going to yank you from that eventually, he's going to yank you and for each believer it's just a little different. For Joab, he just needed to light his field on fire.

It says therefore being told here in this passage that there are times that the Holy Trinity seeks to reach us but the only thing that will get our attention is fire. The invitations didn't work. The messengers didn't work. The favors didn't work. The goodness of God did not lead us to repentance. Godly sorrow did not work for repentance to salvation and so God used fire. Get this now, this is beautiful, the fourth connection: God only uses fire in the fields of those closest to him. Did you know this? According to verse 30, he says, this is what he said to his servants, "Joab's field is nearby." Now I can say humanly speaking Absalom, it never would have occurred to him that he could get Joab's attention with some fire unless he realized they share a fence line. All of a sudden, because of his proximity to Joab in his life, all of a sudden there was resources and extents to which Absalom would go in our story to get Joab's attention. The Scripture says in Ephesian 2:13 that God went to great lengths to make us near to him through the blood of Christ. We are neighbors tonight to Jehovah God because Jesus Christ squeezed us together with him and his commonwealth owners to the commonwealth of Israel. We who are far off not even in God's cul-de-sac were being nigh by the blood of Christ.

So how is it that he even notices what fields of ours to light on fire to get our attention? Because we live close enough. He's paid the price [unintelligible] and so he gets a good eye on us. He's innovative. He knows just what'll get our attention. I mean, he knows what just links of the chain are a little loose, he can wiggle on through there and get in your garden. I'm so thankful that he knows everything about me sometimes, and when I walk [unintelligible], you might say to yourself, "Why does it seem like Absalom went so extreme here? Why does it feel like Absalom went to such extremities?" And then remind me that Absalom was a picture of Jesus Christ. Can you get any more extreme than killing your own son for your enemies? Romans 5:6, "For a good man won't even dare to die but God commanded to his love towards us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Crushed his Son for his enemies. Chapter 8, verse 32, "He even spared not his only Son but delivered him up for us all. How shall he not with him freely give us all things?"

So I don't know that we're going to know any more extremity than God burning his Son in burnt offering, Isaiah 53:10. It says that he pleased the Lord in bruising him. He made his soul an offering for sin. Now think through that now. Our Lord Jesus was burned up in the wrath of God on Calvary, all of that, friends, made I possible. So when you talk about it seems like God wants you to have a great deal of struggle to burn up our fields, no, before he could do that, he burned up his Son, and so I would just like to just maybe, just maybe run some things by you here if I could just to as I land the plane here.

What are some of these things that look like maybe you and I are hard of hearing? Maybe we're not seeing what the Lord is waving behind that rented airplane up there? Maybe we're not seeing the blimp, right, that's sailing through our ball park. Maybe we're not hearing the dog barking next to the field. Maybe we need to hear and see, maybe we need to pay attention so he doesn't light our field on fire. What are some of these things? Ruptured relationships. It might be a field that God has sown. He is doing that because he's close to you. Digression instead of progression at the job. You didn't get a promotion, you got a demotion. It might be, it just might be that he has set that field on fire because he's been sending messengers and they're not bringing back news that you're responding. Maybe hobbies that you're now physically unable to perform because you started worshiping them and he met you on that boat, in that tree stand, out in that library. The things that are by themselves not harmful but they became things that took your affections from Absalom in your life, from the lovely Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David, and so he just made you physically unable to do those things. Why did he do that? Because he loves you and he didn't receive word back from his servants that you and I have [unintelligible]. So these might be fiery fields to break your affections from these uses of time to get back to him and he tried to whisper, doesn't he, and we weren't listening so he set our barley on fire. Loneliness from lack of addiction. Does he know you're despondent because you can't break from your phone screen? You know you're depressed because you can't stop smoking. You know you're hopeless because you can't stop thinking about that old flame you keep checking out on Facebook.

What is this lack of joy? What is this lack of meaningful discourse? What is that empty spot in your soul? What is that lack of fulfillment? You used to be kind of halfway in and

halfway out, and that was during the whisper phase, that was when he was sending messengers to you but now you feel empty. I know what it's like. We feel like we try to two-time Jesus and he lights our field on fire and we don't even like the junk we drink anymore, and it's just the Lord lighting our field on fire. It's a misguided use of God's gifts that he's placed in our life or used in this church and it seems as though our effectiveness in those gifts is diminishing. Look out that rearview mirror, your field is smoking. Maybe your health is failing after a prolonged time of bad nutrition, or a lack of exercise. It doesn't have to be super-deep tonight. Maybe it's time to see that if you look over in the mirror, you've been driving away from a burning field. The authorities in our life, our parents, our pastors, the police, our president, they're in our lives and they're constantly catching us when we break the law, they're constantly assessing fees when we break the rules. Why do they keep catching us? Because that warning didn't work. Because that little bit of help didn't help you. Because the little [unintelligible].

It definitely didn't bring back any good news to the sheriff and so God lit your field on fire. Maybe it could be you're mentally worn out because you're wondering why people are continually angry with you. Well, it could be because you're not getting proper rest. It could be because you are full of anxiety and stress. The Lord says cast all your burdens on him and he'll sustain you. The Lord says be careful for nothing. Why is Bill Sturm sometimes stressed and anxious? Because he's mentally worn out. Well, why was I able to fake it until I name it earlier? Well, because he was whispering to me then but now I'm worn out and my own anxiety, I finding out my barley field's on fire. I think about my precious solitude. I was just so selfish. I didn't have time for everything in my life and I used to be able to skip my devotions and trip my prayer time. Now, now about two or three months into this thing, it's 11 o'clock and I'm not feeling fresh. The person cut me off on I40 and I got angry. The person said something stupid to me at church and I got irritated. A person said something the way they shouldn't have at the job and I got frustrated. I used to be able to fake it and skip my devotion time. The Lord was whispering to me. I said, "No, I only have time for coffee. I only have time for Cinnamon Toast Crunch. I only have time for sausage and eggs. I don't have time to meet with you, Lord." And so he burned my field. And the rude things at the job at 11 AM, or I was bothered in the way that I got in a wreck because I was driving erratically because I got angry.

I know probably none of you have felt this but I'll bet you you've had some fields that God has lit on fire and maybe there's this inability to say no that we pat and coddle because we're such ornery people-pleasers. We can't imagine telling Bertha, "No, sis. I can't come see your worn out second cat's hangnail today, and nurse your hamster back to health." I can't do everything. I've got 17 funerals and 35 Sunday school lessons to prepare and I'm going to tell Bertha, "No," but I won't tell Bertha no because I want her to think I'm Superman. Well, I'll tell ya, after a few months of hearing the whisper, after a few months of getting Absalom's servants come back to my door and say you'd better start noticing some stuff. Ah, now, now God's lit my barley field on fire and I've got health issues and I'm on seven different pills and I've got to figure out how to explain how I double-booked that, triple-booked that. Now I'm losing credibility with people. Just

a few months ago when he was sending messengers after Joab, there was no issues but now I've got a burning field I've got to take care of.

Are you all hearing me tonight? Friends, it's a good idea for us to hear when he sends the messengers and may God help us because our Lord Jesus loves us dearly and he has messengers and I want to rewind it if I can, all those trouble spots in my life, I want to rewind them things and I want to hear the son of David speak to me. I know he doesn't like being shut over there for two years at a time. I know he's calling to me and I want to be sensitive so that he doesn't light my barley field on fire.

Heavenly Father, I pray that you would glorify yourself in the [unintelligible]. Would you please strengthen us?