

Joab Murders Amasa

Call to Worship: Psalm 92:1-4

1st Scripture: 2 Samuel 3:20-30

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 20:3-13

Hymn Insert- *By Faith*

Hymn #772- *Deliver Me From Evil*

Hymn Insert- *The Power of the Cross*

Introduction:

Most of us have probably heard the expression, "When it rains, it pours." Well, once again, for David, it's going to pour. We saw already, that following everything that David had already gone through in the rebellion and death of his son Absalom, that, in spite of his efforts to secure unity in Israel (to his own hurt), another contention had arisen. The men of Israel were angry with the men of Judah, for failing to contact and invite them, to escort the king back to Jerusalem. They were deeply insulted, and assumed the worst, regarding Judah's motives. And then Sheba, the Benjamite, with malicious intent, took advantage of the contention, and fueled the sparks into a great rebellion, which, if left unchecked, could literally split the kingdom in half.

Well, with the burden of having to nip this rebellion in the bud before it leads to a permanent schism, resting upon the back of David, Joab will do something that will add further weight and sorrow to David's already full plate. He will murder Amasa, in cold blood.

I. David's Handling of the Ten Concubines

Now, before we get to Amasa and Joab, we are given some information in verse 3, which is worthy of noting. When David had first arrived back at Jerusalem, he had to address the matter of what to do with his ten concubines, whom he had left behind to care for his house. You will recall, that when David had fled Jerusalem, to escape from Absalom, he had left ten of his concubines in Jerusalem to keep his house. Well, we also saw, that one of the ways in which Absalom had sought to gain the confidence and support of all Judah and Israel, was by having sexual relations with these ten concubines, in a tent, on the roof of David's house, in the presence of all Israel. This would strengthen his resolve and commitment, in the presence of the nation, so that they could give him their whole hearted support, without fearing that he might, at some

point, fail to go through with the whole of the conspiracy. There was no turning back, once he had committed such a horrible act against his father.

Well now, David had to consider what to do with these ten, defiled concubines. He knew that it would not be right to continue on, actively treating them like his wives. He could not be sexually involved with them, because his son had defiled them. Also, their very presence, would always remind the people of Absalom's rebellion, because what they had done, was done in the presence of all. And furthermore, one might legitimately argue, that they ought to have rather lost their lives, than partook in the adulterous tyranny, that they were part of, when they had allowed Absalom to have sexual relations with them. And so, with all that said, David could have had these women put to death, removing every burden that their presence could possibly bring forth. That would have been the easy way of dealing with things. But, he didn't.

Instead, David had done, about as decent of a thing as could possibly be done. He put them in a secluded area, keeping them out of the eyes of the public, while continuing to ensure that they were fully cared for, unto the day of their death. Now, that may seem harsh in some ways, but it really was the only option, if they were to remain alive. Their offense against David, and the potential damage they could do to his kingdom, even by their simple presence at this point, necessitated that they be secluded, away from the population. The fact that they were well cared for, speaks highly of David's kind and gracious spirit. That said, let us move on, to the events found in verses 4 and following.

II. Joab Murders Amasa

David then makes immediate preparations for dealing with the rebellion of Sheba. He charges Amasa, to assemble the men of Judah within three days, and to return to David with the army. He assigns this task to Amasa for two reasons: First, in accordance with his promise to Amasa, he would now remove Joab, making Amasa the commander of the army, in his stead. Joab's harsh and insubordinate rebuke of David, when David was mourning Absalom's death, certainly provoked this change. And secondly, since Amasa was the one, who was in charge of the army, when Absalom was pursuing David, it may have been easier to have him reassemble the army under his charge. As far as the immediacy of the charge (gathering the army together in

three days), David knew that if he didn't nip this rebellion in the bud, it would grow widespread in the north, and Sheba would have enough time to secure and establish himself, in fortified cities (vs. 5-6). [Recall Ahithophel's defeated counsel, which would have led to David's demise]

And so, David sends Amasa off with this charge, but we are told, that Amasa had delayed longer than the set time. We are not given the reason for this delay, but for some reason, Amasa went beyond the three days. And naturally, David begins to grow concerned, especially because of the urgency of the matter, in the need to prevent Sheba from gaining further support, unto wholly establishing the rebellion.

And so, David then turns to Abishai (again, not Joab), concerned that Sheba will cause even more harm than Absalom had caused, ordering him to go after Sheba, with David's mighty men, and his bodyguard. And apparently, under Abishai's command, the army leaves, but Joab, of course, is still part of this army. And obviously, he assumes the role of commander, which his brother Abishai, would certainly not wish to threaten, and the soldiers would easily respect him as such, since that is what Joab has been, all along. And so, regardless of David's design, it's business as usual for Joab, and when anything threatens his position, he will have no problem removing the threat, which is what happens when Amasa arrives.

Heading north, they arrive at Gibeon, and it is there that Amasa (leading the gathered army of Judah) meets up with Abishai's army. And as Joab approaches Amasa, he comes as he had done with Abner in the past, in a cloak of deception, kindness and acceptance. First, so as to be inconspicuous with his deceptive plan, as he is walking toward Amasa, his sheathed sword, begins to slip off of the belt, which is holding it to his waist. And so, the sword falls out and onto the ground. And, as if, it were merely a clumsy accident (like a shoe that unties), Joab simply picks it up, and continues to walk toward Amasa, smile and all. And Amasa falls right into the trap, trusting Joab, unto his own destruction. Joab walks up to Amasa, and says, "Are you in health, my brother?" He uses disarming words, deceptively giving the impression of concern, especially since Amasa was delayed, for whatever reason. And furthermore, he endears him with the term brother, "kinsmen of the same tribe and people, fellow soldier of the same cause, and cousins according to the flesh." Finally, he grabs him by the beard, which was customary for a kiss of greeting, and as he drew Amasa near, He stealthily thrust the sword right

into Amasa's abdomen. Focusing on Joab's face, he neglected to see what Joab was doing with the sword, down below. By the time he had realized what was happening, his intestines were already on the ground. It only took one thrust, and we are told, that he died.

Following this, as if nothing happened; as if, just "continuing where they left off," Joab and Abishai continued on with their pursuit of Sheba. However, for the rest of the army, especially (I would presume) those who had come with Amasa, the reality of a dead Amasa, wallowing in his blood on the ground, prevented them from just moving forward, as if the man's life had no value. And so, one of Joab's men, stands by Amasa's corpse, and attempts to usher everyone along, calling them to make a decisional commitment, which was actually inaccurate. He says, "Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David -- follow Joab!" Not much of an option there. "If you are pro-Joab and therefore pro-David, then follow Joab." The only other option is rebellion, just like Sheba, whom they were pursuing. However, the ultimatum was quite inaccurate, because David had actually chosen Amasa over Joab, and so, Joab's servant here, not surprisingly, coerces the whole army into ignoring the terrible crime that was just committed, and moving forward.

And yet, even then, we are told that the men stood still, not as if to rebel against Joab or David or anyone, but simply because they were in shock; they were traumatized by the cold blooded murder of Amasa, and had a hard time, simply stepping over his body, as it were, and continuing on. So, Joab's servant then took the old, "Out of sight, out of mind" approach. He simply dragged Amasa's bloody corpse off of the highway and into a field, and threw a garment over him. And then, everyone continued to follow Joab.

III. Closing Thoughts and Applications

Having worked through the text, brethren, let us then move on to consider a few closing thoughts and applications:

1) I want to suggest to you that Amasa's delay, for whatever reason, was unwise, and contributed to his own downfall. The man had already received a gracious pardon, beyond what anyone could ever expect or imagine; he was leading Absalom's army on the hunt to kill David! He was at the top of the conspiracy against his own uncle! And yet, after Absalom is defeated,

not only does David spare Amasa's life, not only does David not imprison Amasa (at the least), but David actually appoints him as a replacement for Joab, to command the entire army of Israel! When something like that happens; indeed, when something far less than that happens, you want to walk a fine line, from that point on. You want to do everything in your power to show yourself favorably and supportive of the king, avoiding any inkling of a sense that you have taken his grace for granted.

David gave him three days to gather the army of Judah together and to return, and he failed to do that, without so much as sending a messenger to David! You just don't do something like that, particularly as a former rebel, indeed, a commander of rebels. And so, Amasa, unwisely set himself up to be a victim of Joab's jealous rage, by giving any kind of an appearance of unfaithfulness to David. He foolishly opened up the door for suspicion. His actions just didn't help matters at all, especially having been given the chance to prove himself loyal and reliable to the king.

Let us learn from this, brethren, to never allow ourselves to treat the grace of God (which is far greater, even than David's amazing grace to Amasa), in a cheap and unappreciated fashion. God's grace ought never to be less than supremely amazing to us! Our glorious pardon, indeed, our incomprehensible exaltation unto the position of children of the living of God, and brothers and sisters of Christ, who reign with Christ, ought never to be treated contemptuously, or as if, we ought to have expected it for some reason. Brethren, God's grace toward us is beyond unfathomable! It is exciting to the power of infinite! It makes winning the lotto or any other so-called "lucky" or uplifting event of life, look like hell, in comparison! And what makes it even more amazing is that God's grace toward us did not come by the drawing of straws or the picking of names out of a hat... no, it was intentional, and specifically directed! Why? I have no idea! But God chose us, in Christ, before the foundation of the world! His love was set upon us, in Christ, right from the outset, though we are naturally as sinful and wicked as all who are presently condemned! Let our obedience be motivated and driven by these realities! Let them respond in kind, as much as is within us! Let us be diligent to gather Judah and to return to the king in three days, no matter what the cost or sacrifice... with trumpets blaring, proclaiming His grace to all! Again, whatever the reason, Amasa's unreported delay was unacceptable, and it

ultimately aided in his own demise. [Being casual with God, or in our walk with God, can easily lead to our own demise; let us be as the good soldier: active, ready, diligent and always on call]

2) Brethren, let us see again in Joab, a sober reminder of the hardening affects of sin.

Why was it so easy for Joab to murder Amasa, in cold blood? How could jealousy lead Joab to place such a small value on the life of a man, that he could look him in the eyes and deceptively slay him, and then step over his body and go on, as if their were no relevance to the fact that he just emptied a man's body of his soul? Only because his lack of repentance in the past, and his further justification of his murder of Abner and then the helpless Absalom, led him further down the path of hardness, such that the evil act became easier to commit a third time.

Brethren, that is the frightening nature of unrepentant sin. When we toy with sin; when we continue on in it, and have no remorse or genuine repentance; when we are not desperately driven to Christ for grace, mercy and help, because of our sin, we are only further hardened in it. And what little conscience we had at the beginning, is snuffed out altogether. What a terrible thing to be hardened in sin; to be calloused and numbed to the reality of its evil. We see this at the national level, in our country, don't we? Not only have fornication and sexual sins become more and more accepted and praised by the mainstream, but where have we gone with abortion (the murdering of innocent life) and homosexuality, and look at the sad erosion of integrity, which once held some weight, for any who would dream of holding a public office. What once was shamed and shunned, has become the norm. Sadly, even the church has grown less keen and sensitive to sin, than the world once was.

Young people, you tamper with lying to mommy and daddy, and at the first, you have some guilt, but over time, lying; lying, which is a birth product of the devil himself, becomes easier. The lips just kind of take shape in that direction, and it seems so harmless, becoming easier and easier, but, to a God who loves truth; to a Christ, who is truth, lying is anti-christian and ungodly, and those who remain unrepentant in this sense, will be judged. [*The Gospel]

Only Christ can free the soul from the sucking leach of perpetual sin, and if you find yourself given over to any particular sin; if you find yourself without victory in the battle, you would do well to fall down before Him in prayer, pleading both for the covering of His blood,

and the power of His resurrection to free you from sin's tight grip! See in Joab, the wicked root of a Judas Iscariot, who would deceive and betray with a kiss!

3) Finally, see in the army of Judah both a positive and a negative principle.

Regarding the positive, they seemed to have a sobering sense of discomfort, in the presence of shed blood. Unlike Joab, who could gut a man, and just continue on, with no concern for the corpse that lay, wallowing in the blood, the men of Judah, could not move beyond the sight, though a servant of Joab pushed a dishonest ultimatum upon them. The reality of death; the reality of bloodshed, stopped them in their tracks. It sobered them.

And brethren, to that end, again, let us avoid identifying with our wicked culture, which actually exults in, and gets a thrill out of, seeing people mutilated in all kinds of realistic ways, on the big screen. What is so enjoyable about seeing a man get his throat slit, or his fingers cut off, one by one, or whatever other realistic gore, which serves as a means of modern day entertainment, like the Roman Coliseums of old? Why does that interest us? What do we do with such interests? Are these things, things that are pure and lovely and of good repute; the types of things, which the Apostle Paul tells us to mediate on? Let us restore in our own hearts, a proper sanctity of life, so that the shedding of blood does not grow entertaining for us, but rather, leads us to soberly remember, that such is a sad and telling sign of the effects of the fall of mankind.

And the negative principle is found in what caused the army to move on. Joab's servant merely dragged the lifeless corpse out of the way, and dumped it in a field, and covered it with a garment, so as to remove it from the sight of the people. And now, they could go on. Is it not sad, brethren, that we are so bound by our physical senses, that we could be numb to the world that surrounds us, merely because we are not in direct contact with all of the events that take place? Let us not lose sight of our brethren, who are imprisoned and suffering greatly for their faith, in other countries. Let us remember those who are in chains for the Gospel, as if we were there with them. Let us pray for them, together and individually. And what of the thousands upon thousands of unborn, who are brutally wrenched out of their mother's wombs, right here in our own backyards, daily? So much blood shed; so much innocent blood shed, of little ones, who will never see the light of day, all in the name of inconvenience. But, they are out of sight

and out of mind, aren't they? They are not on the road in front of us. They are dragged out in the field, surrounded by the garment of brick and mortar, with a nice and friendly, "Planned Parenthood" sign, hanging on the front of the building. Oh brethren, these things should move us. They should sober us. They should compel us to get involved... to help in any way possible! Let us not grow dull to the barbaric murders taking place, right in our own backyards. Let us never forget the unborn, as if, to shift abortion, from morality, into the realm of political, social issues. These things matter to God! Life matters to God! And it ought to matter to us!

And in all of these things, let us be ever grateful for the Gospel! There are so many, good and proper Law principles given in Scripture, and we would be foolish or deceived to turn our backs to them. But, as we strive unto these ends, brethren; as we strive unto faithful living, we strive not alone. We strive, in union with our blessed Savior, whose righteousness forever covers us! What would we ever do, for even a moment, if the garb of Christ's righteousness, were ever removed from us? Would we not plunge into despair, even in our best moments of obedience! But, what a lovely Savior, who so loved us, from the beginning, to die for us, and to assure us that no one and no thing, could ever pluck us out of His hand! What a glorious privilege, to be a redeemed sheep, in the glorious flock of Christ! Apart from Him, we are lost, abandoned souls, drifting off into an abyss of condemnation. But, in Him, we are brought near to our living God and Father!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25