

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Biblical Advice on Forgiveness from David.*"

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's gospel verse by verse. We finished a convicting passage on forgiveness. I told you that I wanted to look at an example of forgiveness in the Old Testament, and I chose this account with David and Shimei.

This is our second message on this passage. Last week we talked about Shimei, why he hated David, and what we could learn from him about the dangers of being accusing.

This morning we're going to focus on David who we will see forgive Shimei.

David is famously known as the Man after God's own heart. Perhaps you have wondered why he would be given this title when he committed such terrible sins as adultery and murder. At least part of the reason must be his forgiving heart...which makes him look like a man after God's own heart because of how forgiving God is.

The greatest example of David's forgiveness occurred with Saul. When you can forgive a man who spent years trying to murder you, you know that you're good at forgiving.

But I wanted to look at this example with Shimei, for two reasons...

First, I think we can relate to it better. I hope none of you have ever had someone try to murder you for years, but I suspect all of us have had people curse us and throw rocks at us...at least figuratively.

Second, slander is one of the more difficult sins to forgive, at least for me, because slander involves untrue accusations. Just in case any of you are unfamiliar with the differences between gossip and slander, let me briefly explain them:

- Gossip is sharing negative information about people with others who have no business knowing that information. But at least the information is true.
- Slander is spreading lies about people. If you have been in Sunday school recently when Pastor Nathan taught through 1 Corinthians 5, verse 11 says not to keep company with, or not to associate with revilers or some translations say slanderers.

Let me briefly review...

There were many low points in David's life, but I'm convinced this was one of the lowest:

- David has lost the throne.
- Making it worse the man who stole it was his wicked son, Absalom.
- Making it worse, much of the nation that David loved and served turned against him and joined Absalom, including the elders of the land.

Just when you think things couldn't get any worse, Shimei finds David and his men while they are fleeing Jerusalem. He throws rocks at them and curses them.

Shimei never would've thought of acting like this when David was king, but now that David is in this vulnerable position Shimei is thrilled. This is like a dream come true moment for such a bitter man.

Look what he says in verse eight...

2 Samuel 16:8 The Lord has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood."

Shimei is rejoicing at David's calamity, which Scripture strongly forbids:

- **Proverbs 17:5 He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.**
- **Proverbs 24:17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest the Lord see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from him.**

Obadiah was the prophet to the Edomites, and they were largely judged for rejoicing over Israel's suffering. Listen to a few of the verses...

Obadiah 1:12 Do not gloat over the...day of [Israel's] misfortune; do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin...13 Do not gloat over his disaster in the day of his calamity.

We should never celebrate other people's misfortune, even if they are enemies or we think they deserve it, because it displeases God.

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Look at **verse 9**...

2 Samuel 16:9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head."

Last week I told you it was a bad idea to throw rocks at David's mighty men...especially Abishai. It seems like half the time he opened his mouth he wanted to kill someone. He's the same man who told David to execute Saul when they snuck into Saul's camp in the middle of the night.

But here's the thing...

According to the Mosaic law, Shimei's actions were punishable by death.

Exodus 22:28 "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

Additionally, like we talked about last week, Shimei was Saul's relative, and in the ancient world anyone related to the previous king was a threat to the throne. This is why it was common to execute all the relatives of the previous king when a new dynasty was established.

But look how David responds...

2 Samuel 16:10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the Lord has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

David addresses Abishai and his brother, Joab, implying Joab was probably expressing the same thoughts.

2 Samuel 16:11 And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord has told him to.

Now David moves to addressing everyone instead of just Abishai and Joab.

David's point is if his own son wants to kill him, how much more would someone related to Saul hate him?

2 Samuel 16:12 It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today." 13 So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went and threw stones at him and flung dust.

Shimei didn't just come out and do this and leave. He followed them. Yet there's no record of David responding.

Proverbs 20:22 came to mind...

Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, “I will repay evil”; wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.

This verse is quoted multiple times in the New Testament:

- **1 Thessalonians 5:15** See that no one repays anyone evil for evil.
- **1 Peter 3:9** Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling.
- **Romans 12:17** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. **19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

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So David responded very patiently and graciously to Shimei. The question is, how was he able to do so?

There are a few reasons given in the text and I would like to draw attention to them, because they can help us do the same.

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Notice that twice David attributed Shimei’s cursing to God Himself...

2 Samuel 16:10 But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because **THE LORD HAS SAID TO HIM, ‘CURSE DAVID,’** who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’” **11** And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and **LET HIM CURSE, FOR THE LORD HAS TOLD HIM TO.**

This brings us to lesson one...

Lesson One: We can forgive others easier by thinking about (part one) God’s sovereignty.

Listen to this verse David wrote in the psalms that also tells us why he didn’t respond to Shimei...

Psalm 39:8 Do not make me the scorn of the fool (Shimei is definitely a fool)! **9** I am mute; I do not open my mouth, for **IT IS YOU WHO HAVE DONE IT.**

David said God is behind a fool’s scorning, and that allowed him to remain silent.

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Let me ask you this...

Was God behind Shimei’s cursing?

You want to say no, because Shimei was a free moral agent, and he chose to do this. Plus, his actions are ugly, so we don’t want to assign them to God.

But David said he was. Why is that?

David recognized that nothing happened in his life that was outside God’s will:

- He knew that before anything ever reached him, it first had to pass through the throne of God.
- He saw God’s hand in everything...the good and the bad.

So, when this happened, David had to acknowledge God allowed it, which allowed him to accept it.

It was this confidence in God’s sovereignty that encouraged David to respond the way he did...even to someone like Shimei.

Spiritually great men and women can receive good and bad equally from God.

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Think about Job...

Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.” 10 But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. SHALL WE RECEIVE GOOD FROM GOD, AND SHALL WE NOT RECEIVE EVIL?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job’s confidence in God’s sovereignty allowed him to accept the suffering he was experiencing.

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When we reflect on God’s sovereignty, even if He isn’t the one doing something, we still see Him in control of whatever is happening...even if it is painful and we hate it:

- The good and bad
- The blessings and cursing
- The joys and the trials
- The good treatment and mistreatment

He wants to use all of it in our lives for our good and His glory.

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Look back at **verse 12** to see another reason David was able to respond this way to Shimei...

2 Samuel 16:12 It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today.”

David thought God would repay him with good, BECAUSE of the cursing he experienced. Without the cursing there would be no reward.

It wasn’t a guarantee. David said **it may be that the Lord will** versus **the Lord will**, but just the thought of this possibility encouraged David to overlook Shimei’s behavior.

And this brings us to the next part of the lesson...

Lesson One: We can forgive others easier by thinking about (part two) God’s goodness to us in return.

Listen to what David wrote in the Psalms...

Psalm 10:14 You do see, for you note mischief (or harm) and vexation (or anger), that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless.

If you ever feel like you are experiencing harm or anger from others, be encouraged that **[God] sees [it]** and can **take it [into His] hands**.

Maybe you feel **helpless** like David described, but David mentioned the **fatherless**, because they’re the picture of helplessness in the ancient world. The idea is if God can help the fatherless, He can help us.

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David knew two things about the situation:

- He was doing what was right.
- What was being done to him was wrong.

Scripture repeatedly tells us that if we are serving the Lord and doing what is right and what is being done to us is wrong, then like David, we can expect the Lord to take notice and hopefully reward us in the future. Here are just a few verses...

Luke 6:22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

I wouldn't put the mistreatment we experience on par with the persecution, and sometimes martyrdom, the prophets experienced, but the point is still the same that God wants to reward those who are mistreated while faithfully serving Him.

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The author of Hebrews encouraged his readers with this reality...

Hebrews 10:34 You joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

The author of Hebrews was addressing people who were being mistreated – their property was being taken – while they were serving the Lord. He told them to look forward to their reward in heaven.

None of us want to be mistreated, but if we are mistreated while faithfully serving Christ, hopefully we can think about David's example and take heart that God can look down and reward us as a result.

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There's one more thing that I think allowed David to forgive Shimei, but before I share it with you, I want to look at a few necessary verses in **1 Samuel 25**.

Here's the context...

When David was on the run from Saul, he and his men took the job of protecting Nabal's flocks. For an entire season they performed this valuable service at a time when Philistine raids were common, especially for those who had large flocks, like Nabal did.

Because they did all this so faithfully for months, it was reasonable for David to expect some compensation. Look at **verse 8**...

1 Samuel 25:8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.”

David didn't ask for a certain amount. He simply said whatever Nabal had available was fine. But look at **verse 10** to see how Nabal responded...

1 Samuel 25:10 And Nabal answered David's servants, “Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters.

It would have been insulting enough if Nabal didn't give David anything, but Nabal went beyond that and TRIED to insult David. He didn't just talk bad about David, he even talked bad about his father, saying, “Who is Jesse?” You never want to talk bad about someone's dad. He's acting like they're both nobodies, which was ridiculous regarding David, because he had become a national hero after defeating Goliath.

And if this wasn't enough, he acts like David was rebellious for fleeing from Saul.

Of course, Nabal had no problem with David when he was protecting his flocks, but now he acts like David is terrible.

Nabal's just making excuses so as not to have to compensate David because to justify not paying David he must act like David is someone who shouldn't receive anything from him.

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Notice the number of "mys" in the next verse...

1 Samuel 25:11 Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where?"

You can't miss Nabal's selfishness.

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This is not going to go over well with David...

1 Samuel 25:12 So David's young men turned away and came back and told him all this. 13 And David said to his men, "Every man strap on his sword!" And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage.

Now let's be honest: what was NABAL THINKING?

There are certain guys in the Old Testament you just didn't mess with:

- For obvious reasons you didn't mess with Samson – unless his head was shaved...then you could mess with him.
- You didn't mess with Moses. The ground opened and swallowed Korah and some other guys that messed with him. His OWN sister got leprosy when she messed with him.
- You didn't mess with Elijah. He called down fire on platoons of soldiers that came after him and he was able to summon bears to come and maul kids who called him bald.

And you didn't mess with David. He killed lions and bears, dodged spears, was asked to kill 100 Philistines and decided to kill 200 instead, and of course he killed Goliath.

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Nabal wanted to insult David and David felt insulted. He took 400 men with him. I mean he fought Goliath 1-on-1 but now he's got 400 guys for Nabal. That's how mad he was.

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Now at this point most of the guys, if we are honest, think it would be cool to be able to be like David and look around at a bunch of other hardcore guys and say, "**Every man strap on his sword.**" An equivalent today would be, "Lock and load," or if it was a western, we would say, "Mount up."

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And if you didn't know this account, what would you expect?

David is going to go to Nabal and:

- Demand that he pay him.
- Maybe scare him a little bit.
- If David is being petty, perhaps insult him in return.

We could almost wish that's what David intended. Instead, look at **verse 22**...David is speaking in the third person...

1 Samuel 25:22 God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him."

This is shocking! David was going to kill Nabal and – there's no other word for it – murder all the males belonging to him.

You probably know the rest of the story...

Nabal's wife, Abigail, reaches David when he's on the way. She intercedes, David relents, and thanks her for stopping him.

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Now why did I want you to look at this?

It is tempting to look at David's response to Shimei and think, *"Well, he is just such a patient, calm, gentle man that it was easy for him to respond this way."*

That is not the case at all.

The fact is...

David is a different man in **2 Samuel 16** when he is getting pelted by curses and rocks from Shimei than he is in **1 Samuel 25** when he is insulted by Nabal.

And if you ask me, between the two accounts, I think it would have been harder for David to restrain himself from hurting Shimei than murdering Nabal:

- Shimei was right there...
- He wouldn't stop...
- He was following them...
- Abishai and others were telling David to execute him...

Yet he was able to control himself.

David really was a changed man.

The question is, *"What happened between 1 Samuel 25 and 2 Samuel 16 to produce this change?"*

Two things:

1. First, David committed adultery.
2. Second, David committed murder.

I think he was humbled by his own sins. David knew how patient God had been with him, and it encouraged him to be patient with others.

Our recognition of our sinfulness should also cause us to be patient and gracious with others.

And this brings us to the next part of the lesson...

Lesson One: We can forgive others easier by thinking about (part three) our sins.

In **Luke 7:47** Jesus said, **"He who is forgiven little, loves little."**

Jesus didn't mean there are people who have been forgiven little. We've all been forgiven much. He means people who show little love to others are showing how little forgiveness they think they've needed.

It really comes down to pride:

- If we think we're great, we're not going to have much patience with others.
- But if we see ourselves as wretched sinners, we're going to be gracious to other wretched sinners.

If you remember from last week, what was Shimei's main accusation?

Basically, that David was a murderer...

2 Samuel 16:7 And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, YOU MAN OF BLOOD, you worthless man! 8 The Lord has avenged on you all THE BLOOD OF THE HOUSE OF SAUL, in whose place you have reigned, and the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for YOU ARE A MAN OF BLOOD."

Shimei accused David of being a bloodthirsty man toward Saul's house, which wasn't true, but let me ask you this...

Had David spilled blood?

He spilled Uriah's blood.

Why couldn't he build the temple?

1 Chronicles 28:3 God said to me, 'You may not build a house for my name, for you are a man of war and HAVE SHED BLOOD.'

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And there were plenty of other things Shimei could've said that would've been true: He could've called David:

- A liar
- A betrayer
- An adulterer

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It is tempting to get upset when people slander us. And by slander, I mean say things about us that are not true.

But if these same people knew us better, they could probably say worse things about us that are true.

Rare are the people who have not done some number of things:

- That they are not ashamed of
- That they don't regret
- That they don't want the world to know about

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And all of this should make us much more patient and gracious with others.

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The fact is:

- When we slander people
- When we talk bad about others
- When we gossip

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It is often a reflection of:

1. Our pride that allows us to look down on others
2. A revelation that we have forgotten how sinful we've been
3. And an indication that we have lost appreciation for all Christ has forgiven us for.

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The next time we're about to get upset with someone who's mistreating us, we should think about our sins. We'll probably find ourselves being considerably more patient.

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The most forgiving people are those who believe they've been forgiven for the most.

Now we're going to continue the story with Shimei by jumping ahead to **2 Samuel 19**. You need to know we're looking at the opposite situation: instead of fleeing Jerusalem because David lost the throne, he is returning to Jerusalem because he regained the throne.

Of course, Shimei never expected this or he wouldn't have treated David like he did. He's coming out to see David again, but he'll be much different this time. Look at **verse 18** and notice the repetition of the word **king** to remind us David is king again...

2 Samuel 19:18 and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household (this is David) and to do his pleasure. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, 19 and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart.

He's like, *"Please don't remember when I cursed you and threw rocks at you and kicked dust at you and called you a scoundrel and worthless murderer and accused you of stealing the throne from Saul at the lowest point in your life. Yeah, just forget about all that."*

2 Samuel 19:20 For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king."

He repented. Let's see how David responded. Skip to **verse 23**...

2 Samuel 19:23 And the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king gave him his oath.

Wow, looks good ,right? David swore to Shimei he would live.

Turn to the right a few chapters to **1 Kings 2**.

Do your Bibles have headings around **verse 10**? Probably something about David's death?

We are at the end of David's life.

Look at **verse 8** to see David's last recorded words to his son, Solomon...

1 Kings 2:8 "And see, you have with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' 9 Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood."

Shockingly, David went back on his forgiveness!

And this brings us to lesson two...

Lesson Two: Christ's forgiveness is greater than David's.

Shimei sinned against his king and deserved to die. He repented and the king forgave him and told him he'd live.

This is a great picture of us and our relationships with our King, Jesus. We've sinned against our King, we deserve to die, but if we repent we can be forgiven and He tells us we will live:

- **John 6:40 Jesus said, "Everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."**

- **John 10:28** Jesus said, **“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.”**

David makes a great type of Christ being a king who forgives a sinful servant. But the forgiveness David gave Shimei was faulty and pales in comparison to the forgiveness found in Christ.

David withdrew his forgiveness.

I understand why David wanted Shimei dead. He was passing the throne to Solomon, and he knew Shimei would remain a threat.

Even if David had good reasons for wanting Shimei executed, they don't matter. All that matters is he broke his vow.

We don't have to worry about that with Christ. He doesn't withdraw His forgiveness or go back on His word.

Hebrews 6:17 When God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise (us) the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath.

The Lord will never say, *“You know, Scott did all those bad things. What was I thinking forgiving him like that? I think I'll remove my forgiveness.”*

Let me leave you with a quote from Spurgeon...

“Perhaps you have been like Shimei, who cursed king David, and you are afraid that Jesus will never forgive you. But David forgave Shimei, and Jesus is ready to forgive you. He delights in mercy. The harps of heaven never give Christ the happiness He experiences when He forgives the ungodly saying, “Your sins are forgiven; go in peace.”

If you have any questions about anything I have shared in the sermon or I can pray for you in any way, I will be up front after service and I would consider it a privilege to speak with you. Let's pray.