

## Dr. Robert Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 23, 2 Samuel 13-15

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This is Dr. Bob Chisholm in his teaching on 1 and 2 Samuel. This is session 23, 2 Samuel 13-15:12. You Reap What You Sow, 13. A Prodigal Son Comes Home in Body, but Not in Spirit. 14.1-15 12.

We're ready to move into 2 Samuel chapter 13, which I've entitled, You reap what you sow. And often in life and the human experience, children repeat their parents' sins.

And that's going to happen in this chapter. The Lord's justice is going to continue to unfold. David announced that the rich man who stole the lamb should have to pay back four sheep.

David is of course that rich man. He's already made installment number one in the fourfold payment. The baby that was born to David and Bathsheba from their adulterous encounter died.

The Lord struck the baby and the baby died. In this chapter, we're going to see installment number two. So, in the course of time, in chapter 13 verse 1, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David.

So Tamar is a beautiful young woman and Amnon is attracted to her. He falls in love with her. Fell in love here is being used, I think, strictly in physical terms, almost equivalent to lust.

He's attracted to her physically. You may be thinking Amnon son of David and Absalom son of David, is this Amnon's sister? Well, it's his half-sister. They have different mothers.

And so, Tamar and Absalom are siblings. They have the same father, David, as well as the same mother, but Amnon has a different mother. So, he's falling in love with his half-sister here.

As you read through the text, the text is going to emphasize the incestuous nature of Amnon's love. Brother-sister language is going to be used all through here. It's the narrator who is trying to keep before us the nature of this relationship and that it's wrong.

Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill. So, he is so lovesick here, literally, that he falls ill. She was a virgin and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

So, he feels as if the nature of the relationship, her status as a virgin, there's just no way he's going to be able to fulfill his physical desires for her. Now Amnon had an advisor named Jonadab, son of Shemiah, David's brother. And he asked Amnon, why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me? What's going on with you? And Amnon said to him, I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

And so Jonadab here is going to give Amnon some advice on how he can get together with the love of his life, Tamar. And I think what we see here in David's royal court, we have Jonadab, who's called a shrewd man. There's an element of wisdom here, but genuine wisdom grounded in the fear of the Lord is not really present in David's royal court.

Yes, they're smart people, intelligent people who can devise plans, but wisdom, genuine wisdom is kind of turned on its head here. And so this is what's happening in the royal court around David. And so here's Jonadab's plan.

Go to bed and pretend to be ill, Jonadab said. When your father comes to see you, say to him, I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.

In other words, yes, I'm sick father, but it sure would help me if I had a nurse. Tamar would be a good one to send down. Maybe she can come down and she can kind of be my nurse and make me something to eat.

That would be good. So, Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. He's going to implement the plan.

When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight so I may eat from her hand. David sent word to Tamar at the palace. And so, what we're going to see here is this word send is going to be showing up.

Again, remember, it's a reminder of David's authority. David can give orders and people will do what he says. And so back in chapter 11, he was sending here and sending there and he was in the know and he was plotting the demise of Uriah so he could have Bathsheba.

And his abuse of authority led to some serious crimes. Well, he's still going to be exercising authority in this story, sending and sending. But in this particular case, he's outside the loop.

He doesn't really understand what's going on behind the scenes like Jonadab does. And so, he's going to send Tamar down there to her demise. Later in the chapter, he's going to send Amnon to the sheep shearing that Absalom is holding.

And Absalom is plotting Amnon's death and he's going to be sending Amnon to his demise. So hopefully you see how David's exercise of authority is backfiring. It's going to backfire in this chapter.

And it's all part of God's just punishment of David. So, David sends word to Tamar, go to the house of your brother, and prepare some food for him. So, Tamar does what her father commands.

So, Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight, and baked it. So he's lying there watching her cooking away.

She serves him the bread, but he refuses to eat. Apparently, there are other people around, servants and the like. And he says, send everyone out of here, Amnon said.

So, everyone left. He wants to be alone with Tamar. And then he says to Tamar, bring the food here into my bedroom.

So apparently, he's back in a bedroom. There are some outer rooms where others are, and he really wants to be alone with her. So, I may eat from your hand.

And so, Tamar takes the bread that she prepared. She brings it into Amnon. And when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed hold of her.

He grabs hold of her and says, come to bed with me, my sister. Literally, come lie with me, my sister. That's an echo of David's sin.

It's the Hebrew verb, which means to lie down, and sleep. Sometimes used euphemistically for sexual contact. It's the word that was used for David's intercourse with Bathsheba back in chapter 11.

And it's showing up here. And he's saying, come to bed with me, my sister. We're being reminded again, that this is incest, what he has in mind.

He wants to have a relationship with his half-sister. This is forbidden in the law. But you know, in his warped perspective, he may be using the word here in more than just a relational sense.

He may be using it in a romantic sense because the love poetry of the Song of Songs uses the sister in a metaphorical way for the young man's bride. You can see that in Song of Songs 4 and 5. And maybe that's the way he's using the terminology here. You wouldn't think that he would mention the relationship in this kind of request, but he may be using it romantically.

But nevertheless, we are reminded of what's really going on here and the sin that's involved. And she says, no, my brother, don't force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel.

Don't do this wicked thing. What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king.

He will not keep me from being married to you. But he refused to listen to her. And since he was stronger than her, he raped her.

So, she tries to talk him out of it. She says this is wrong for us to do this. And she says, don't, my brother.

And it's interesting because there are several parallels between this account of the rape of Tamar and the account in Judges 19 through 21 of the rape of the Levite's concubine, which precipitates a civil war in Israel. You remember there was a Levite who was traveling with his concubine and they stopped in Gibeah. And before the night is over, the men there, wanted to have relations with the Levite, but instead, they sent his concubine out and she was brutally gang raped and murdered.

And there are several parallels between that story and this one. And this is not something that I dreamed up. Other scholars have seen this.

And I'm just going to run through those parallels so you can see the accumulation, which suggests that this is not just coincidental. First of all, the words, the contemplated rape of the Levite and Amnon's contemplated rape of his sister are both called a disgraceful or wicked thing. Nivalah is the Hebrew word.

Israel's horrified response to the concubine's murder. Remember the Levites sent body parts around and the Israelites responded to that. Sounds very much like Tamar's appeal to Amnon, where she says such a thing should not be done in Israel.

Back on that occasion, such a thing had never been done in Israel. So, there's something unique about the wickedness here. Both passages use the same Hebrew verb.

It's *inah*, which means to abuse or humiliate, to describe the crime. This is what Amnon did to Tamar and it's also what these men of Gibeah did to the concubine. The Ephraimites' appeal to the men of Gibeah back in Judges chapter 19, he says, Know my brothers, don't do this wicked thing.

Structurally, it's identical to what Tamar says to Amnon. Know my brother, don't humiliate me. The expression, know my brother, plus a prohibition, it occurs nowhere else but in these two texts, which tends to suggest that maybe there's an intertextual connection with them.

Both the men of Gibeah and Amnon rejected the warning given to them. They refused. They would not listen, as we are told in both texts.

After raping Tamar, Amnon, as we'll see, we haven't read this verse yet, we will, he says to her, get up and get out. He wanted to satisfy his lust for her, but because she didn't reciprocate and probably fought him, that offended him. He wanted a willing love partner and he didn't get it.

He was going to satisfy his physical desires, but now, because she doesn't reciprocate, he just wants her out of his sight. His words, arise, go, echo the Levite statement to his concubine the morning after her horrible experience. Remember, she crawled back to the house and he callously said to her, get up, let's go.

As far as he was concerned, she was damaged goods. And I think what we see here, it's almost as if the narrator of our story is subtitled Amnon's Rape of Tamar as Gibeah Revisited. Something just like the judge's period has happened here right in the royal court.

And of course, if you go back to that judge's story, there are all kinds of literary connections between that account and Sodom, the Sodom account, where the Sodomites wanted to rape the messengers, the visitors that had come to Lot. And so the judge's story could be called Sodom Revisited. This story could be called Gibeah Revisited.

And so, there's a sense in which Sodom and Gomorrah have come to the royal court. And so, she tries to talk him out of it. And there is, scholars will sometimes puzzle over where she says, please speak to the king.

He will not keep me from being married to you. According to the Mosaic law, that can't happen. That's why he's so frustrated in the first place here and decides he's just going to take what he wants, no matter what the law says.

So, what does she have in mind here? Well, she's a desperate woman at this point. And I think she's just trying to stall. She's trying to deflect him.

Hey, just go and ask Dad. Everything will be fine. He would probably say, no, I can't do that.

But she's operating on her emotions here. And who knows? She may be, this may be a commentary on David. She may be thinking, well, yeah, the law forbids this, but knowing my father, he may just let it happen anyway.

So, we're not really sure what's going on in her mind. This is an attempt to stall him, to be able to get away. And so naturally she would just say, hey, just ask dad, ask the king.

He won't keep me from you. We can be married. But he refuses to listen and he rapes her.

And then verse 15, Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. This shows that any love he had was strictly of the superficial physical lust variety.

And when she didn't reciprocate on that, he didn't want to have anything to do with her anymore. Amnon said to her, get up and get out. And then verse 16, no, she said to him, sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you've already done to me.

But he refused to listen to her. What she's thinking at this point is I've been violated. And she's thinking in terms of rape rules and that sort of thing.

And she's saying, now that you've violated me, I'm ruined. I'm damaged goods. My life is over.

You need to marry me at this point. But he is not going to go there. And so he calls his personal servant and verse 17 and says, get this woman out of my sight and bolt the door after her.

So, Tamar is a very sympathetic figure in all of this. She's a victim and she really deserves justice. Someone needs to step forward and bring Amnon into account for what he has done.

But the servant puts her out and bolts the door after her. She's wearing an ornate robe. For this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore.

So, they wore special garments which communicated I am a virgin daughter of the king. But Tamar puts ashes on her head. She tears the ornate robe she was wearing as if to say this is not an appropriate attire for me anymore.

She puts her hands on her head, which must have been a gesture of mourning. And she went away weeping aloud as she went. So here she goes violated, and raped by her own half-brother.

Her life is ruined in this culture. She's damaged goods. She goes home and her full brother Absalom says to her, has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Did he do this to you? And then he tells her, be quiet for now, my sister.

He's your brother. Don't take this thing to heart. It seems like he's being very calloused here.

But that's not the case. And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman. She's not going to be able to be married.

No one's going to take her now. How is David going to respond? When King David heard all this, he was furious. And Absalom never said a word to Amnon.

David is furious, but it may be more important to recognize what he didn't do. There's an emotional reaction. He's mad, but he doesn't do anything to Amnon.

He doesn't execute justice against him for what he's done. He doesn't defend the cause of Tamar. Absalom doesn't say anything, either good or bad.

But he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar. There's an honor-shame factor involved here. And the honor of Absalom and his sister has been violated.

And so, he hates Amnon. And he is going to do something about that. And in verse 23, two years later, he's biding his time.

There's going to be a sheep shearing. And Absalom goes to the king and he says, will you join me? Why don't you come down, father? And David says, no, my son, all of us shouldn't go. We'd just be a burden to you.

The whole family doesn't need to show up at the sheep shearing. Absalom urges him, but he still refuses to go. He does give his blessing.

And then Absalom says, well if you're not going to come, why don't you let my brother Amnon come down with us? And it's almost as if part of David is suspicious here. Why should he go with you, he asks in verse 26. But Absalom urges him.

So, notice what David does. He sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king's sons. So just as David sent Tamar to her demise, he does here.

He doesn't realize it at this point. Absalom has set something up. And he tells his men, listen, when Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, strike Amnon down, then kill him.

Don't be afraid. Haven't I given you this order? Be strong and brave. I think what he's saying is, here's what I want you to do.

And I don't want you to waver in this and hold back because it's murder. I'm the one who's responsible. I've given the order.

You are simply my instrument. And so don't worry about it. Just do it.

So, Absalom's men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules, and fled. So, the murder occurs and the other sons are wondering, what's going on here? Is he targeting all of the sons? And so, they flee when this transpires.

Well, it's interesting some of the language that's used here. When Absalom tells his men, to strike Amnon down, then kill him. Those are those, that's that set of verbs that we talked about earlier.

There is an echo here of David's murder of Uriah. Remember he told Joab not to draw back, so he wanted Uriah struck down and killed. And now we have Absalom using that same language as he orders the death of his half-brother.

And so, while they were on their way, the report came to David. The sons are retreating and the news comes to David, Absalom has struck down all the king's sons. Not one of them is left.

That's an exaggeration. It's fake news. It's the kind of thing that happens.

Oh my goodness, Absalom has wiped everybody out. No, the king stood up, tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground and all his attendants stood by with their clothes torn. But Jonadab, the fellow who had advised Amnon on how to get together with his sister, son of Shemiah, David's brother, one of David's nephews, says, My lord should not think that they killed all the princes.



Only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom's express intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. And I'm wondering, the gall of this guy, because I'm thinking why isn't the king could say, why haven't you told us? But, my lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead.

Only Amnon is dead. I know, I know about Absalom's target. He's a foil for David in the story.

It's amazing that David doesn't get angry at him over this. Maybe he did, but the story doesn't say so. He's in the know.

He understands what's going on behind the scenes. He knew, he advised Amnon to do what he did to Tamar. He's aware of what Absalom intends to do, even though Absalom is trying to keep things undercover.

He knows. David doesn't know. And there's an irony in this.

The king who sends everybody doesn't know what's happening in his own royal court. It's come to that and it's all part of God's punishment of David because this is installment two. Also, there's another element of justice here.

Remember when Tamar went back after being raped and she tore her garment, she tore her clothes, and she wept loudly. And David got mad at Amnon, but he really didn't do much of anything. And so, Absalom, I think, finally decided, I'm going to force this issue.

If my father's not going to bring justice upon Amnon, then I'll do it. And notice that everybody ends up with torn clothes weeping here in this story. So, David is beginning to feel what Tamar felt, I think.

Well, you may be wondering, what's Absalom going to do? What's Absalom going to do? Well, he flees, according to verse 34. And then the messengers come and they give David the full account of what's happening, and everybody's wailing loudly. And the king, too, and all his attendants wept very bitterly, according to verse 36.

In the meantime, Absalom gets out of town. He flees and he goes to Talmai, son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur, over in the Transjordanian area. This is grandfather on his mother's side.

And so, he goes and decides to live with his grandparents in a safe place. King David mourns many days for his son, and Absalom stays there in Geshur for three years. There is some debate as to how the translation should be here, but we are told in verse 39, at least according to one interpretation, King David longed to go to Absalom because he was consoled over Amnon's death.

As time passes, David has a real liking for Absalom as well, especially since Amnon is gone now. And so, Absalom has run away, Amnon is dead, and David has paid installment number two in the fourfold payment. And that brings us to chapter 14.

In chapter 14, verses 1 through chapter 15:12, which we'll cover rather quickly, what we're going to see here is a prodigal son is going to come home in body, but not in spirit. So, in chapter 14, verses 1 through 15, 12, a prodigal son is going to come home in body, but not in spirit. And so, we read in chapter 14, verse 1, Joab, son of Zeruah, knew that the king's heart longed for Absalom.

The way that translation makes it sound, David just longed to be with Absalom, there is some uncertainty concerning the translation. It might just be he knew that David was thinking a lot about Absalom. Whether there was that additional emotional aspect to it depends on how you interpret the Hebrew text.

David is still at least thinking about Absalom, and so Joab decides we need to get Absalom back here. We're not given his motives in this. Perhaps he's concerned that if something were to happen to David, maybe he doesn't have a lot of confidence in the other options for a successor to David.

Maybe he perceives Absalom as one who would make a good king. At any rate, he decides that he is going to get Absalom back home. And so, Joab sends down to Tekoa, and there is a wise woman there.

And I think wise in this context, in the sense that she knows how to use words well. But once again, this is trickery. Wisdom is trickery in these contexts.

Jonadab, his advice to Amnon, was basically designed to trick David. And he was called a shrewd or wise person, but wisdom got turned on its head. Same thing here.

Joab is going to use this wise woman for deceptive purposes. He's going to try to manipulate David into a situation where he agrees to bring Absalom back. That seems to be Joab's desire here.

So, he tells the woman, you need to dress the part here that I have in mind for you. Pretend you're in mourning. Dress in mourning clothes.

Don't use any cosmetic lotions. Act like a woman who spent many days grieving for the dead. So, I want you to pretend you're a mourner.

So, a wise woman here seems to be equated with being a good actress. We're just going to deceive David. Then go to the king and say this to him.

And basically, Joab puts the words in her mouth. And she apparently has a reputation as a wise woman. She's going to be able to execute this well.

And she's going to go to David and she's going to fall down before him and beg for help. And David asks her, what's troubling you? And she's going to say, I'm a widow. My husband is dead.

And I had two sons. And they got into a fight. And one of them struck the other and killed him.

So, one of my sons killed, maybe murdered, my other son. Now the whole clan is up in arms against your servant. And they're demanding that I hand over my son, my living son, to them so they can execute him for murder.

But she says, here's the problem. I don't want to lose both sons. I've already lost my one son.

And it's important to me that my living son, even though he killed his brother, be kept alive. Because he's the only heir. And we don't want the family line to die out.

They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth. And so, she appeals to him on this basis. Family is more important than justice in this particular case.

And by the way, this seems to be the way David thinks. Joab never got brought to justice. And they're hoping Absalom won't.

So, the woman says, let my lord, the king, pardon me and my family and let the king and his throne be without guilt. So, David has said, I'll issue an order on your behalf. And David then says in verse 10, if anyone says anything to you, bring them to me.

They will not bother you again. I'm going to rule for you in this. And she said, then let the king invoke the Lord his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction so that my son will not be destroyed.

In other words, I really want you to make sure that you give an official edict here, overturning what they want to do. And so, David says, as surely as the Lord lives, not one hair of your son's head will fall to the ground. So, she's really pressed David to make a ruling on her side.

And David has been willing to do this. And so, then the woman says, let your servant speak a word to my lord, the king. Speak, he replied.

And the woman says, why then have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? She kind of turns this around against David. When the king says this, does he not convict himself? For the king has not brought back his own banished son. In other words, you're making a ruling on behalf of me and my son.

You're showing great compassion for my son. But what about your own? What about your own banished son? Like water spilled on the ground. Now remember, Joab has put her up to saying all of this.

So, her argument is, you have intervened and been compassionate toward me and my son, sparing his life. But what about your own son, your own banished son? And then in verse 14, and remember, Joab is putting these words in her mouth. She has been told exactly what to say.

She is a wise woman. She's good at communication. And so, he has chosen her.

And so, this is Joab's philosophy that's coming through here. Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. Everybody dies.

Death is inevitable. But that is not what God desires. Rather, he devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him.

So, the argument seems to be that, hey, everybody's got to die, but God's in the business of restoring people. And God doesn't go around killing people. He thinks of ways that a banished person can be restored.

And this is Joab's philosophy. He is a murderer. He has not faced justice, other than having David call a curse down on him a couple of times after he killed Abner, but he's not faced justice in any kind of practical way.

And this is his philosophy. People die, and God is in the business of restoring them so they don't have to remain banished. And it also reflects his attitude toward Absalom.

Think about it, Joab and Absalom are very similar in a lot of ways. They're both murderers. And so, Joab wants David to show mercy to this murderous son of his, just like he's shown mercy to Joab in the past.

So now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought I would speak to the king. She goes back to her own issue here.

And so now your servant says, May the word of my lord the king secure my inheritance from my lord the king. It's like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. She flatters him.

You're such a wise person. The irony of all of this is that David is not so wise in this story. He's really on the outside looking in.

May the lord your God be with you. Well, David is no fool. The king says to the woman, Don't keep from me the answer to what I am going to ask you.

David suspects something here. Let my lord the king speak, the woman said. The king asked, Isn't the hand of Joab with you in all this? Come on, tell me now.

Didn't Joab put you up to this request to bring my son home? And the woman answered, As surely as you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything my lord the king says. So, she flatters David a little more here. It was your servant Joab who instructed me to do this, and who put all these words into the mouth of your servant.

You're exactly correct. I'm simply saying what he asked me to say. Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation.

He feels that a change is in order. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God. He knows everything that happens in the land.

So, she flatters David a little bit more. And again, the irony is, no he doesn't. In this particular context, he's picked up on what she's doing, but he really has not understood a lot of things that have been going on.

And so, the king said to Joab, Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom. And Joab falls on his face, pays David honor, and blesses the king.

And Joab says, Today your servant knows he has found favor in your eyes, my lord the king because the king has granted his servant's request. So, Joab thanks David. I appreciate the fact that I have some standing before you where you would grant my request.

So, Joab goes to Geshur. He brings Absalom back to Jerusalem. But David is not ready to fully embrace Absalom at this point in time, literally or figuratively.

And the king said He needed to go to his own house. He must not see my face. He can come back here, but I am not ready to have a relationship with him.

So, Absalom went to his own house. He didn't see the face of the king. And the story just kind of pauses there for a moment, and then the narrator is going to stop to talk about Absalom.

In verse 25, In all Israel, there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. So, Absalom is a very attractive individual. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.

This suggests that his physical appeal could make him, in the eyes of many, a prime candidate for king. There's a little bit of foreshadowing that's going on here. Absalom has a lot to offer.

Some people who tend to view things superficially, look at outward appearances, would think he'd make a good king. And indeed, he is going to go for that, and he's going to get a lot of support in his attempt to take kingship. So there is some foreshadowing.

Whenever he cut the hair of his head, he used to cut his hair once a year because it became too heavy for him. He would weigh it, and its weight was 200 shekels by the royal standard. That's three pounds, thereabouts.

A lot of hair, so he's a good-looking fellow. Three sons and a daughter were born to Absalom. His daughter's name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.

So, he names his own daughter after his defiled sister. And that's a reminder to us of that whole incident where justice had not really been served until Absalom killed Amnon. The Tamar incident is still kind of in the background here.

He lives two years in Jerusalem, according to verse 28, and doesn't see the king's face at all. And so, Absalom wants to be reinstated fully. He doesn't like this arrangement.

He's a prodigal son who has been brought home but has not been fully embraced by David. And so, he sends for Joab. He's thinking, I need to contact Joab.

Joab brought me back here. I need to get Joab to come and go to the king and help me out here. And he sends a second time and Joab doesn't come.

It appears that Joab has changed. Joab wanted him back, maybe because he felt like we needed to have him around in case something happened to David. He is the best candidate for king.

But then apparently when he sees David's attitude toward Absalom, Joab backs off. And he is not close to Absalom at all at this point. So, Joab's attitude seems to have changed.

So, Absalom does something pretty radical. And this shows the kind of person he is. See, a lot of this is characterization.

Absalom looks king-like. He names his daughter after his defiled sister. The Tamar incident is still eating at him, or he's being reminded of it, at least, a lot.

And now he can't seem to get Joab's attention. So, what do you do when you can't get somebody's attention? Well, we could come up with a lot of reasonable explanations. Well, maybe he just needs to go and personally confront him.

No, why not just burn his field down? Burn his house down, you know, burn his field down. So, he says, look, Joab's field is next to mine. He is barely there.

Go set it on fire. That'll get him over here. And sure enough, it does.

Joab did go to Absalom's house. And he said to him, why have your servants set my field on fire? So, this is characterizing Absalom as someone who will resort to anything to get his own way. And Absalom says, look, I sent word to you, and you didn't come.

So, I had to do something to get your attention. Why have I come back from Geshur? It would have been better for me if I were still there. Now then, I want to see the king's face.

And if I'm guilty of anything, let him put me to death. So, he kind of pushes the envelope here, as if to say, you know, I really didn't do anything wrong. I just did to Amnon what he had coming to him.

And so, if I've done something wrong, execute me. If I haven't, fully instate me. That seems to be his argument at this point.

So, Joab went to the king and told him this. And the king summons Absalom. He comes in, bows down, and the king kisses him.

Which I think is a sign you've been fully reinstated. Well, as chapter 15 begins, and we're going to look at the first 12 verses rather quickly, it's quite apparent that Absalom has a plan in mind. He has designs on the throne.

And you could argue that he sees David as a weak king who is not promoting justice as a king should do. And so, he sees himself as one who can rectify that, and that'll be a good thing for Israel. And so, in the course of time, Absalom provides himself with a chariot and horses and 50 men to run ahead of him.

That's kind of got a royal guard, royal aura flavor to it, according to the standards of the culture. This is what kings do, and so he's kind of presenting himself as king-like. This is at least the way he's thinking of himself.

And then he'd get up early and go and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Basically, what happens, apparently, people will come to the city, they'll come to David for rulings on what is just. It's kind of like the woman of Tekoa did, that Absalom was working within the prior chapter.

And people are coming from the tribes of Israel with problems, and Absalom is right out there to intercept them and meet them. And he says, he talks to them this way, Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you. Justice is not being served at the moment here.

He's trying to undermine, I think, what's going on with David. And Absalom is saying, if only I were appointed judge in the land, everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice. Really? Well, there are always competing parties in these things, but he seems to be promising satisfaction for everyone.

That's impossible. So, Absalom is presenting himself as a champion of justice, as if to say, My father is not really qualified to continue to rule because we all know that kings are responsible for justice. But I am committed to justice.

I will make sure that everyone's just cause is heard, and I will be a champion of justice for Israel. According to verse 5, Whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him, and kiss him. Kind of like a politician kissing babies.

He is trying to endear himself, and ingratiate himself with the people. And he behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice. And so, he stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

He's a slick politician, and he steals their hearts. And it's quite apparent at this point that he has designs on the throne. And he indeed is going to create a rebellion and try to take David's throne away from him.

Four years pass, and Absalom says to the king, now he's ready to move. He says, Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the Lord. While your servant was living at Geshur and Aram, I made this vow.

If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron. There's an irony here because this is where David was made king initially over Judah after Saul's death. Remember he went to Hebron, and the men of Judah recognized him as king, and he ruled in Hebron for seven years.

So, the king, David, who really is not in the know anymore, he doesn't see what's going on. He says, Go in peace. And so, Absalom goes to Hebron.



But he had sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel announcing that, Come to Hebron because Absalom is going to be recognized as king there. Remember he's won their hearts over. He's got support.

He realizes this is the time to move. And so, 200 men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter.

While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahitophel. Some people would pronounce that Ahitophel, but Ahitophel in Hebrew. The Gilonite, who's David's counselor.

And so he invites him to come, and apparently, Ahitophel is ready to throw his support over to Absalom. The conspiracy is gaining strength. And Absalom's following kept on increasing.

And so, we'll stop there for this lesson at that point. And we see that Absalom, the prodigal, came home in body. But he didn't come home in spirit.

And what we're also seeing is David's failure to implement justice against people who deserved it, is having serious personal repercussions. His failure to do something to Amnon when he had raped Tamar emboldened Absalom. And he decided to become the champion of justice.

And I think that was the catalyst for his decision to try to become king. Because he doesn't see David as a proper king. And so, he will replace his father.

I'm not suggesting that he's right in this, that the Lord is endorsing this at all. But David's failure is the catalyst for continued sin. The fact that Joab was never brought to justice may have said a lot to Absalom as well.

So, David is going to be in trouble here, as we'll see in the next lesson. Absalom is basically going to organize a revolt. And it comes to the point where he actually takes Jerusalem and drives David from the city.

And we'll be looking at all of that in the remainder of chapter 15 and chapters 16 and 17.

This is Dr. Bob Chisholm in his teaching on 1 and 2 Samuel. This is session 23, 2 Samuel 13-15:12. You Reap What You Sow, 13. A Prodigal Son Comes Home in Body, but Not in Spirit. 14.1-15 12.