

October 30, 2022

Absalom's Fall, Pt. 3

2 Samuel 18:9-17; 19:1-8

By Aaron Shamp

Introduction

- Joab is an enigma. At times he is the protagonist and speaks wisdom; yet, at other times he is antagonist and acts foolishly. He reflects one of the reasons that I love the Bible. The characters are very realistic.
 - In spite of all that, there is one statement we can confidently make about Joab. Like many warriors, he is a man driven by duty and responsibility.
- What can we learn about Christian duty and responsibility through this imperfect man?

Joab's Insubordination

- "Treat the young man Absalom gently for my sake" (2 Sam. 18:5). Those were David's last words to his generals before they marched into battle.
 - Is that either right or practical? Absalom deserved judgment for his murder, deceit, treachery, and rebellion. Moreover, he was the head of the serpent in this ordeal.
- Joab had a duty to do *what was right* over *what was ordered*.
 - David had a duty as king but was unwilling to do what was required to secure the kingdom.
 - Joab was taking the responsibility that David absconded. He is vindicated (2 Sam. 17:14).
 - In Joab, we can see that there is a higher Word that requires obedience.
- **Point:** Christian duty might occasionally require faithful disobedience.
 - This applies to any authority in our lives. Government, bosses, spouses, etc.

- *Insubordination to man for the sake of obedience to God is righteous.*
- In 2010, two hundred Chinese house-church leaders were detained by the government for attempting to attend the Lausanne Movement.
 - “On one hand we obey the government’s legitimate and common governance, respecting the power of its sword; on the other hand, through nonviolent civil disobedience, we will preach the word whether in season or out of season (2 Timothy 4:2). People can be chained, but the gospel cannot be chained (2 Timothy 2:9); the servants may be killed, but our Lord has already risen.”¹
- **APP:** Resist evil and obey God.
 - Any disobedience must be considered carefully because we are taught to obey the proper authorities over our lives.²
 - Is this a legitimate authority? In other words, do not allow sin to rule over you (**Rom. 6:12**).
 - Is this a legitimate authority acting outside of its sphere?
 - “We must obey God rather than people” (Acts 5:29).
 - “Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.” John Knox

Joab’s Alarm

- Joab called David to fulfill his duty over indulging his emotions (**19:5-7**).
 - David’s mourning was jeopardizing the victory. Those who followed him were dismayed.
 - Is his mourning over his son inappropriate? No. But he has a duty as king.
 - David’s responsibility requires him to go against what he feels in the moment.
- **Point:** Christian duty will frequently require going against our emotions.
 - For example, I performed both of my grandmother’s funerals.
 - Composure in loss... Working hard... Speaking truth... Giving...
- **APP:** Fulfill your duty despite your feeling.

- In any situation, ask yourself what is required of you. “What does God expect of me? Who has he called me to be? What responsibilities has he placed on me?”
 - You aren't *always* required to be the speaker, or strong one, or one to give...
 - But when you are then you must step up to the calling.

David's Tears

- Nevertheless, you find it difficult to read David's cry, “My son! My son!”
 - He mourns that Absalom died instead of himself (18:33). Any parents can identify.
 - However, Absalom died for his own sins, as difficult that is for David.
 - A Son of David would come who wouldn't die for his own sins but for the sins of others.
- **Point:** Christian duty always finds its origin in this Son of David.
 - Jesus was obedient to the Father over and against the ruling authorities or the devil (Mk. 2:24; Lk. 4:1-13).
 - Jesus fulfilled his calling in spite of what he felt (Mk. 14:32-42).
 - We fix our eyes on the founder and finisher of our faith.
- **APP:** Wait for the day when the Lord will wipe away every tear.
 - David's mourning must have been compounded by his own guilt (18:33).
 - All of the trouble that has come upon his family and the nation is due to his sin (12:10-12).
 - Therefore, we are left with a paradox at the end of this story—a safe kingdom, a sad king.
 - Perhaps this is why in the end God himself must wipe away every tear from our eyes (Is. 25:8, Rev. 21:4).
 - Once again, cast yourself upon the Son of David who bears our griefs.
 - “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...” (Is. 53:4, KJV).

End Notes

¹ Wang Yi, “Why We Are A House Church,” in *Faithful Disobedience: Writings on Church and State from a Chinese House Church Movement*, ed. Hannah Nation and J. D. Tseng (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, 2022), 28.

² Helpful books on the relationship of the Christian to the state and resistance theory include *A Christian Manifesto* by Francis Schaeffer, *Slaying Leviathan* by Glenn Sunshine, and *Live Not By Lives* by Rod Dreher.