

When Unforgiveness Begg for Mercy

by Carter Conlon

The sermon calls believers to confront unforgiveness in their hearts and embrace the mercy of God through forgiveness of others.

Duration: 57:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:14

Topics: "Unforgiveness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses the parable of the vineyard to illustrate how people often reject the truth even when it is plainly presented to them. He emphasizes that God means what He says and that we will be held accountable for how we respond to His word. The preacher urges the congregation to let go of resentment and prejudice towards others in order to experience the glory of God. He also shares a personal story of warning someone about their future choices and encourages the listeners to make the right choices in their own lives.

Transcript

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Obviously, he'd be all wrapped up. I don't know how he came out of the tomb, probably very slowly, very methodically. And Jesus sent some messengers and said, Now, many of you here today, many of us, you are out of the grave as it is of sin and death and you are alive in Christ.

I want you today to receive me and to receive what the Lord's given to me as a messenger that's sent to unwrap something that may have very intricately woven itself into your life. And God gives skill to those

that he calls. Now, this is very different than the way I normally would present a message.

I have a lot of scripture. I'm going to very slowly, methodically go through this, unwrapping something. And sometimes it really takes the Lord to put an image of something before you to be able to see what it is that's gotten a hold of your heart.

Today, I believe that for those who are affected by what I'm about to speak, and if you have the grace to hear it and to respond to it, it's going to change the course of your life. It's not an idle boast. It will not be just another mental ascent to truth, but it will be something, if you respond to it, it will change the course of your life.

I mean this with all of my heart. I feel that kind of weight in my mind and heart today. I'm going to speak on a topic called, When Unforgiveness Begs for Mercy.

When Unforgiveness Begs for Mercy. If you go to 1 Kings in the Old Testament, please, chapter 2, put your Bible down when you found that, and join me in prayer, please. Father, I thank you, God, for the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

It is very evident that there's a weightiness of your presence here today. You've come to speak to our hearts. You've come to share something with us that you see, something that has to be removed, something, Lord, that you will not manifest your glory until this is dealt with.

I pray, God, for the grace to speak this with such tenderness. I pray for your people that we would all have the ears to hear it. I ask you, Lord, to take me again beyond the borders of my natural understanding and ability, all preconceived ideas of what I'm to speak.

I pray for an anointing of the Holy Spirit. Oh, Jesus, you're the only one that can open these prison doors. You're the only one that can give sight to those who have become blinded.

It's only you, Lord. And so I pass this upon you, and God Almighty, I give you in advance the glory for everything that will transpire here today. Lord, you've spoken to my heart.

This is a day of great deliverance. Give us the grace to hear these words. Give me the grace to speak it.

Oh, God, I pray, let your name be glorified and let your heart be glad. I ask this in Jesus' mighty name. 1 Kings 2, beginning at verse 28.

Then tidings came to Joab, for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord and caught hold of the horns of the altar. And it was told King Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord.

It's verse 29. And behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.

And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, No, but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab.

And thus he answered me. And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him, that thou mayest take away the innocent blood which Joab shed from me and from the house of my father. And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and

better than he, and slew them with the sword.

My father David, not knowing thereof to it, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Emesa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab and upon the head of his seed forever. But upon David and upon his seed and upon his house and upon his throne shall there be peace forever from the Lord.

So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and fell upon him and slew him, and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. Now this passage of Scripture portrays the terrible end of a man whom history should have recorded as a mighty man of God. If you look at the end of these passages of Scripture, these chapters on the life of David, you'll find that the mighty men of God are listed.

And even though Joab led the armies as it is of David in much of the conquest of things that were victoriously conquered during the reign of King David, he's not listed as a mighty man of God. His brother is, and even his armor bearer is listed among the mighty men, but not Joab. At the end of his days, we find this man who led the army, who won marvelous victories.

He even did much of what he did in the name of the king that he was serving. We find him clinging to an altar, seeking for mercy which has departed from him. James said in chapter 2 verse 13, for he shall have judgment without mercy who has shown no mercy.

What got into this man's heart? What brought him on such a journey that he could be among those in the early days perhaps who saw the anointing on King David? He was stirred possibly as others were in that day when David was being pursued by Saul or immediately thereafter to become a mighty man. He was a man of courage. He was a man who was not afraid to fight.

He was a man who was given to conquest. And he appeared to have a wholehearted service to the king, David, of course, who we're going to speak of today as a Christ type for you and I. He was a man that you would look at and say, this is a good man. This is a powerful man.

This is a victorious man. This is a loyal man. How does such a man end up at the end of his days? Now, keep in mind, this is only a short season before Solomon is about to build the temple where the glory of God is coming.

And this man, had he lived long enough and honorably enough, could have been there to see this glory. But instead, he's holding to the horns of an altar, begging for mercy as it is, and the mercy has denied him. He's gotten to the point in his life where mercy has departed from him.

Now, if you'll put a marker in First Kings 2 and just go ahead shortly in your Bible to Psalm 10. Now, I believe that Joab is the type of man that this psalmist in Psalm 10 speaks about. He's a man who has certain things in his heart.

They're never dealt with. These things lead him to certain actions. But in spite of these actions, he does not believe he will ever be in a place that he will be overcome.

Now, folks, I have to tell you, I have seen this over and over and over and over again. In the years that I've been a Christian, in the years that I've been a pastor, I have met, I have known, I've counseled, I have wept, I've pleaded with people who are in this exact same position. They have allowed something into their heart and they do not believe that it will overcome them.

They've created a false religious system, grave clothes as it is. I've interwoven themselves around about the very essence of who they are and they have embraced something of death. But instead of recognizing it for what it is, they tragically begin to call it life.

Psalms 10 says, the wicked, in verse 4, through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts. Now, Job is a man who has the king in some of his thoughts, but the service to the king and to God is not in all of his thoughts.

There's a mixture in this man, a dangerous mixture that he himself most likely doesn't recognize. His ways are always grievous and thy judgments are far above, out of his sight. And as for all his enemies, he puffs at them.

His judgments, the judgments of God, the justice of God, because his mind is not set on the things of God, are out of his sight. He doesn't have a view of what could happen to his own heart because he has chosen to allow certain things to continue to abide there. I remember one time having a man in my office and I pleaded with him.

God gave me a word of knowledge and I set before him two pathways and I saw it as clearly as I'm standing here. And I said, within a matter of just a few months, this is what you're going to do. This is the end of your days.

This is what your future is going to be like. Now, I cried out to him, take this path. Don't do these things.

Now, he looked at me straight in the face and said, no, I'm not going to do these things. I'm not heading in the direction that you're speaking about. But I was speaking to him in the spirit.

I had a word of knowledge. It was beyond just counsel. I saw something in the spirit.

And within a few months, he went in the exact direction that the Holy Spirit had warned him about. And the tragedy and distress that's now coming into his life, and the difficulty it brought into his home, and the heartache of the people around him because he couldn't see. Something had become intertwined in his character.

And even though the Lord was trying to say this is not good, he had learned to call it good and was not willing to recognize what it was. His judgments, thy judgments, it says in verse 5, are far above out of his sight. He has said in his heart, verse 6, I shall not be moved.

I shall never be an adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud. And under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

He sits in the lurking places of the villages. In the secret places does he murder the innocent. His eyes are privily set against the poor.

He lies in wait secretly as a lion in his den. He lies in wait to catch the poor. He does catch the poor when he draws them into his net.

He crouches and humbles himself that the poor may fall by his strong ones, or that means by his strength. This is exactly, we're thinking about Joab and these verses in Psalms 10, verses 4 to 10, exactly fits what had happened to this man. God had left a great measure of his thinking.

The judgments of God were put out of his sight. He said in his heart, I can continue on the way I'm doing things and I shall not be brought into adversity. And subsequently his mouth became a place of fraud and mischief and vanity and deceit began to come out of his mouth.

And you're going to see this in a minute. All the tendency of the human heart. Incredible depravity of your heart and mine.

The ability to take something evil and refashion it in our thinking and begin to call it good. Jeremiah was a prophet of God. And in Jeremiah's day, he came to the people and he came with a broken heart.

He came with the passion of God. And he came to them and said, judgment is coming upon the nation. Because of certain actions and attitudes of the people toward the things that God had spoken.

And he spoke to the kings, he spoke to rulers, he spoke to the princes, he spoke to the rank and file, he spoke in the temple, he spoke in the streets. And now he told them also how they could be safe. God had given a plan, he had given a way out.

But it's not what the people wanted to hear. They didn't like the plan of God. And so, they took the messenger of God and the scripture tells us they put him in prison.

Then in Jeremiah 37, 17, King Zedekiah, when things got looking really bad around him. He brought Jeremiah out of the dungeon, it says secretly and privately brought him to his house. And said, Jeremiah, is there a word from the Lord? And Jeremiah says, there is.

You will be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Nothing had changed. This is the word that Jeremiah had been bringing to the people all along.

And the principle is simple. No matter where we put the messenger, the word of the Lord remains the same. You can relegate me to the ranks of just ranters and railers and pulpits.

You can put away what God's given me to speak. You're free to do that. But the word of the Lord remains the same.

Nothing changes. You can walk out of this service today and say, I don't agree with this. I'm not walking in that direction.

And ten years from now, you'll begin to fall into difficulty. You'll go back in the house of God and the very same word is going to come to you again. No matter where you put the messenger or the message, God's word will come to pass.

The fear of the Lord, Proverbs 9, 10 says, is the beginning of wisdom. And the knowledge of the holy is understanding. The beginning of wisdom is understanding that God means what God says.

We cannot change His mind. We cannot alter His standard. We cannot refashion Him.

We cannot reform Him. What He says is exactly what He means. Go with me to Luke chapter 20, please.

I want to show you this by way of illustration in the New Testament. Luke chapter 20 and verse 14. Now, Jesus is speaking to His own people a parable.

And it's a parable about a man who planted a vineyard. He gave it out to people to tend it and went away for a long time. And at a certain season, He sent a servant to give him the fruit.

He wanted the fruit back from this vineyard. Now, He's talking about His own people, His own nation at that time, Israel. They set apart people of God.

And they beat the servant and sent him away empty. Then He sent another. They beat him and sent him away in the same manner.

He sent a third. They wounded him, verse 12, and cast him out. Then said the Lord of the vineyard, verse 13, what shall I do? I will send my beloved son.

It may be they will reverence Him when they see Him. Now, here is the Son of God. This very parable is being fulfilled before the people who are listening to it.

But when the husbandmen saw Him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do to them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen and shall give the vineyard to others. Now, that's exactly what was going to happen. In A.D. 70, the Roman Empire came in, destroyed Jerusalem.

And there was not one stone in the temple left upon another. The nation was dispersed as it is until its miraculous regathering not too long ago. And it says when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

Isn't that amazing? That God Himself is standing there and the response says that they understand what He is saying. And they look at Him and they say, God forbid. Yet, strangely, even agreement and a slight horror at the thought could not bring their lives into agreement with what was being said.

That's the strange condition of the human heart. I can preach something to you today and you can say, God forbid. That's an awful thing.

But it doesn't necessarily mean that your own heart will be brought into line with it. They had an image of themselves. They had their own theology they developed.

And in spite of the fact that they clearly understood what He was speaking, and it brought them a measure of shock, they could not be brought into agreement with it. And it stems right from the Garden of Eden. The temptation of Satan, based on truth as he saw it, at least in Genesis 3, 5, he says, you partake of this and you will be as God's, knowing good and evil.

That means you will have the power, as God does, to create the standard of what is right and what is wrong. That's what He was offering them. It's God who says what's right.

Remember that Satan was fallen because he disagreed with God. He came and planted that seed in man and woman who were born and made in the image of God. And He said, now, if you partake of what I've partaken of, your eyes are going to be opened and you're going to see it's not only God that creates the standard, you will have the power, as God does, to create the standard.

And, of course, this is the dilemma that's in the heart of fallen men. This ability to hear with the ears the words that God is speaking, but to reject with the heart that says, no, I will be as God in this situation, and I

don't think God's ways are just or right. I don't think God means what He says.

So I will now be as God and I will create this standard of, I will take what is evil and I will call it good. And that's exactly what's in the heart of fallen men. That's why men reject truth.

That's why truth can be as plain as the signs on the corner that say Broadway and 51st. It tells you exactly where you are. But the blindness in the heart of men causes them to reject where He is.

And He declares that He's somewhere else than where God says He is, and where the signs have clearly pointed to. Now, in Matthew chapter 6, go back just a little bit in your Bible, I want to just read to you some verses of Scripture, just two verses of Scripture that this message really is all about. Verses 14 and verse 15.

Now, God means what He says. Do you believe this? I believe it with all my heart. Do you believe we will stand before God one day and we will answer for what we know? What did we do with what we know? Did we let it grip our heart? Did we respond to it? Did we move in the direction of truth? Or did we succumb to that seed of our fallen nature that says, no, I have a better way to do this, or another way.

And I will take what's evil in my heart and I will call it good, and somehow I will not bear a consequence for this. But listen to what Jesus says in verses 14 and 15. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Thanks be to God. Verse 15. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

It's as simple as that. God says, I'm willing to forgive you, but I'm setting a condition in your heart, I'm going to bring you to the knowledge that I require you to forgive every man, every woman, every person, every country, every leader, every race, every situation, every past memory. I require you to forgive those that have wronged you.

That means as I'm releasing you from the debt, you are to release them from the debt. As I'm opening my arms to embrace you, you are to open your arms and to embrace them. I'm asking you.

Now, of course, we thank God with everything in us today that we're not required to do this in our own strength. For none of us can do it. That's why God gives us His promises and gives us the power of the Holy Spirit.

As He forgave us, He is willing to come and from the heart, as it says in Matthew 18.35, give us the power to be able to forgive those that have wronged us. Beloved, I can mark some specific signposts in my journey as a Christian. And in following the call that God placed on my life, and I remember as a young Christian, I heard a message like this in a service.

It was the first time I'd ever heard it. Now, there were people in my past that did things that left a lot of pain in my heart. I could have held on to these grievances.

I could have said, no, I will not let them go for what they've done. They deserve to pay a price for what was done to me in those years. But I heard a word like this, and I remember going to an altar, and I remember tears starting to come to my eyes, and I began to shake because it's not easy to let some of these things go.

But that day, by the grace of God, I forgave. I forgave them all. I began to speak their names out loud, and I let these grievances go, and the freedom that came into my heart.

Folks, I can't even begin to describe the measure of freedom that God brought into my life that day, and opened my mind to truth, opened my eyes to the pathway that He had set before me, opened my eyes to the call that He placed upon my life. And I do believe that this was one of the pivotal signposts. Many people never grow in grace.

They never amount to anything that really honors God, because of this simple thing, they refuse inwardly to forgive those that have wronged them. They are willing to embrace, they're willing to drink in the forgiveness of God. They're willing to search it out in the Scriptures.

They're willing to swallow it down at every moment. They're willing to run back to God every time they think a wrong thought, speak a wrong word, or do a wrong deed. But they're not willing to offer that same grace to those that have wronged them.

In spite of the fact that Jesus says, if you do not, neither will my Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses. I want to suggest to you this morning that forgiveness is not an option. Forgiving others is a commandment of God.

We must forgive those that have wronged us, or we will never understand nor know what it is to walk in the glory of God. I believe that this very thing is the root that became part of Joab's life, and eventually led him to the place where we begin in our text today. Hebrews 12, 15 tells us that bitterness is a root, which will defile those who are given to it, and eventually lead them away from the grace of God.

It is a root. It's the only sin in the Bible that is described as a root. When we allow bitterness to get into our lives, we might be able to control it in the beginning, but its root will begin to go deeper, and the root of grace will begin to get shallower.

And eventually it will intertwine itself in our very character, and take away the very life of God's grace within us. In 2 Samuel, if you go back there please, in your Bibles, just before Kings, 2 Samuel chapter 3, I want to show you exactly where this began in Joab's life. In chapter 3 and verse 21.

We'll have to go fairly quickly through this. Now, when David began to reign over God's people for seven years, Scripture tells us he reigned only over a certain part. I'm not going to go into all the names and all the details.

And there was a son of Saul that was reigning over the other part of the kingdom of Israel, and he had a military commander called Abner. And verse 21 tells us that Abner said to David, Abner came to David and he said, I will arise and go and will gather all Israel to my Lord the King, that they may make a league with thee, and thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away and he went in peace.

Now, I'm speaking of this as a Christ type. David is a Christ type. And Abner is the type of a man who is drawing close to the king, and he has the potential to lead many others there.

Abner was the commander of the portion known as Israel at that time. He's the commander of the armies. And he had a sense in his heart that David was called to be the king over all of God's people.

So he said he came to David. And now he had fought battles. And in these battles, people had been killed.

They were legitimate deaths as it is because they were, I don't know if there's any such thing as a legitimate war, I suppose, but there were wars. And people were killed. And Abner came to David and he said, I'm going to bring to you, and it's the type of a man coming into the church who's not yet completely surrendered to Christ, but there's a call of God on his life.

Or there's a call of God on her life. And that person has great potential to lead many to Christ. Follow me in this as best as you can.

But Joab, in verse 23, it says, Joab and all the host that was with him were come. They told Joab, and they said, Abner, the son of Ner, came to the king, and he has sent him away and he's gone in peace. Now, Joab could have rejoiced.

And said, oh, thank God. My enemy has come to the king. My enemy has come to the house.

And I don't understand everything, but what the king does is right. And Joab had the choice. He could have received a man who was technically his enemy.

Now, in battle, Abner had killed Joab's brother. He had tried to turn him away. This young man was pursuing him as he was in retreat.

And he turned and said, get away from me. Take one of the young men. But he said, stop pursuing me.

But Joab's brother wouldn't stop the pursuit. And Abner was forced to kill him. Joab took a deep grievance to this and wouldn't let it go.

And then he says, you see now, Joab can only see circumstances from the viewpoint that a man has who carries within himself an unsundered grievance against another person. Joab had a grievance against Abner. Abner had done something that had touched his immediate family circle.

And in his heart, I'm sure he had swarmed that one day he would extract vengeance on this man. Now, in verse 24, it says, Joab came to the king. And he said, what have you done? Now, think about it.

There's a type of a man who's already in the church. And Jesus is receiving this man who's come in who was technically his enemy. And he says, what have you done? Behold, Abner came to you.

And why is it that thou send him away? He's quite gone. Thou knowest, Abner, the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy coming out and thy going in, and to know all that thou doest. You see, he's now questioning the king.

The king is a Christ type. David, of course, is in the lineage of Christ. And he's questioning him.

He says, do you really know what you're doing? That's the very seed of Eden. Setting a standard, setting the judgment above the things that God speaks. Do you really think you're doing right by receiving this person into fellowship? Do you not know what he's done? Do you not know what's in his heart? Do you not know the kind of a man or the kind of a woman that he is? There are people in this sanctuary, perhaps, today.

You've glanced at one point across an aisle, and there's a person who's really wronged you. May be stolen from you or said a harsh word to you. And in your heart, there's this stirring and this sense of grievance with God.

God, how can you let that person sit here in this sanctuary? How can you let them raise their hands? How can you let that person draw close to you, give a pretense, at least, of drawing close? That's what Joab was inferring. It's all a show, God. It's all a show, David.

There's no truth in this. But the reality is, David knew this was true. This man truly was called.

And he had the potential to lead many to the kingdom that God was establishing through his hand. And so Joab sends messengers after Abner. And in verse 27, Abner comes back to him.

He believes that perhaps everybody in the camp of David has the same heart as David. And new Christians come into the church and tragically sometimes believe that everybody in the church has the same heart as Christ. And he comes back.

His guard is down. He believes they're on the same path. He returned to Hebron.

Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly. And smote him there under the fifth rib that he died for the blood of Asahel, his brother. And the fifth rib, of course, is in the area of the heart.

He took him. And under the guise of friendship, he takes a knife and puts it right through into his heart and kills him. And that's what bitter and unforgiving people do.

They have a false value system which allows them to wound others at will, believing that there will be no consequence. How many people over the course of church history, eternity is going to reveal it, have walked into the house of God, drawn by the Holy Spirit, because they smell or because their hair is a certain color or style or too long, or their apparel is not quite what it needs to be in the house of the Lord, or for various other reasons. They come in believing that, oh, finally, I've found a kingdom that's worth living for and worth fighting for.

Only to be greeted in the lobby by a Joab who comes to them and speaks a word to them because there's an unsundered bitterness within the heart. A Joab that feels that he or she can speak anything to anybody that they want to speak and somehow there will be no consequence. You dare not come into this house looking like that or smelling like that or acting like that.

They take their sword, they take the Word of God even, right into the fifth rib, right into the heart. How many people have been turned away from the house of God? In the course of church history, by a Joab, a person who simply has an unsundered grievance in the heart against somebody, has created a false standard and now has the freedom to wound anybody they want to, comes into the house of the Lord. Proverbs 18.21 says, Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

Oh, folks, be careful what you say to other people in the name of God. Be careful how you speak. Jesus said, by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.

Be careful even how you open the Scriptures at the back door of the house of God. Be careful on the street corner what you speak to a new Christian who's coming in, and God is drawing them to Himself. In 2

Samuel 10, in verse 12, the Scripture shows us that as Joab continues on, he shows strength for causes that he views as just.

They're fighting it. Now, keep in mind, these two things are going on simultaneously in this man's life, and that's why some Christians are very confusing people in the house of God. They're very zealous for truth, but they have this unrighteous root that is manifesting through them at the very same time.

Joab goes and he's fighting the enemies of David, and he says to the men of Judah, Be of good courage and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do that which seems Him good. These are good words. These are words of a man who seems to be a warrior fighting on the side of the king.

In 2 Samuel 12, verses 27 and 28, the Bible tells us that he continues to conquer in the king's name. He sends word to David and said, I've taken the city. He said, come down here quickly and mount up some warriors and fight the last battle as it is before the city falls, lest it should be said I've taken it in my own name.

He's telling the people to have courage. He's using God's name. He's doing it in the king's name.

But something else is at work in him. The root of righteousness is drying up, and the root of bitterness is going deeper into his character, folks. You can't serve them both.

You cannot serve God and let this root of bitterness continue to live in your life at the same time. In 2 Samuel, you don't have to turn to chapter 18, as we see the progression of Joab. He loses the fear eventually of touching even those closest to the king's heart.

He knows the word of the king. The word Absalom was the son of the king who rebelled, and David said, don't touch him. Bring him home to me safely.

But what does Joab do? He found this young man caught up as it is in his own foolishness, and he thrusts his heart through. He doesn't bring him home to the king. He's got a false sense of right and wrong now, and he's not afraid to touch those that are closest to the heart of the king.

Folks, people go out and they lay hold of the backslider and just absolutely ruin any chance of that young man or woman ever coming home to God because they don't have the heart of compassion that comes from Christ because of this root that's now going deeper and not just touching the stranger now, but now they're touching those that are sons and daughters of the king. They're touching those that are closest to the heart of God, and there's no fear in them anymore. In 2 Samuel 19, when David finds out that his son Absalom is dead, he mourns and weeps.

The Scripture says he puts dust on his head and begins to cry, Oh Absalom, Absalom, oh my son Absalom, what to God I had died for thee. And Joab finds out that the king is weeping over his action and goes into the tent, and he now is rebuking the king. This is the type of man now his arrogance has gone beyond just setting his judgment.

He's now doing what Satan longed to do the whole time. He walks into the dwelling place of the king and rebukes him and says, you would have been happier, I'm sure, if all of us would have died and your son would have been spared today. He says, I swear to God that if you don't get out of this place of weeping and sit at the door of the tent, there's not one person that's going to be left following you.

He's now rebuking the king openly, and he's rebuking the king as if there's a deficiency in his heart for what he has done. He is now so emboldened in his rebellion. And now he moves from this.

In 2 Samuel 20, now David says to a man called Emesa, I'm giving you Joab's place in the army. He says, I swear to God, you're going to take Joab's place and you're going to be head of the army in his place. Now, Joab looks at this man Emesa and he sees him as a threat to his own position.

And he assassinates this righteous man Emesa. He just kills the righteous man. His conscience is now completely gone.

He doesn't care who he's smiting anymore. He's now arguing with the king. He's killed the king's son.

He's got no conscience anymore. And now he will assassinate anybody that gets close to his position. I often wonder, what is the root in the ministry of ministers who carry this kind of a spirit? If anybody even looks like they have an anointing, they will assassinate them, virtually kill them.

And that root is in the ministry, folks. Not just in the ranks, it's in the ministry today. It's the same spirit.

It's an undealt with bitterness. Somewhere along the line, a wounding came into their life, and they would not let the grievance go. It has led them on a path that has blinded their eyes to the ways of God and the truth of Christ.

Now, it's interesting. In 2 Samuel chapter 20 and verse 20, there's this new man that rises up called Sheba. He leads some people in rebellion against David.

Joab goes out to pursue him and his army. He pursues them into an enclosed city. They're about to attack the city, and a woman of Israel leans over the wall.

And she says, I'm a mother of Israel. Will you come in and will you destroy God's heritage? Will you destroy a mother of Israel? And Joab says these strange words. He says, far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy.

He doesn't see himself anymore for what he is. He's got a completely different image of himself. He's totally deluded now spiritually.

Oh, far be it from me that I should take life without cause. Far be it from me that I should ever swallow up. He has just thrust the sword into the side of Emesa.

He's just killed a righteous man, but he has a view of himself as a completely righteous man on a path of truth who would never harm anybody unnecessarily. Now, you see, I'm going to show you now in 1 Kings, if you'll go there, chapter 1. We'll try to get through this in the next 10 minutes if I can. I want to show you now where those who live in direct rebellion to God will go.

In 1 Kings, chapter 1, verse 5, it says that, Then Adonijah the son of Haggath exalted himself. Now, Adonijah is Absalom's brother. He's saying, I will be king.

He prepared him chariots and horsemen and 50 men to run before him. Now, verse 7 says, He conferred with Joab the son of Zariah and Abiathar the priest, and they, following Adonijah, helped him. And Adonijah, it says in verse 9, slew sheep and oxen and in fact cattle by the stones of Heloth, which means the stone of the serpent, which is by Enrogel, and called all his brethren, the king's son, and all the men of

Judah, the king's servants.

Now, here it is. This man, Adonijah, exalts himself, sets himself up as a leader. He's not called of God to lead the people of God.

He's a man in total rebellion to God's order, to God's word, and God's revealed will. Where is Joab now? He confers with Joab, and Joab is now completely blind, because he himself is a man given to rebellion, so he doesn't recognize rebellion anymore. And he would have formerly killed a man who rebelled against the king, and now he's joining him.

Now he's becoming part of the pack, as it is, who are trying to overthrow the order of God. And in verse 25, here's the incredible thing. It says, Nathan is talking to David, and he says, For he has gone down this day, and this is Adonijah, and it said, and he's slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and has called the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest.

And behold, they sit and eat and drink before him, and they say, God save king Adonijah. Now, Adonijah is the man who exalts himself above the knowledge of God. God had already spoken through David that Solomon was to be the next king.

But this man, Adonijah, exalted himself above the revealed will of God, and the word that had come from the king, and he ends up sitting among a group of people who are worshiping the wrong king. God save the king who exalts himself above the knowledge of God. They end up in the wrong house, listening to the wrong preachers, preach the wrong words, speaking words that exalt themselves above the knowledge of God.

God save king Adonijah. This is where Joab ends up. He's sitting at this table of idolatry.

But folks, here's the core. You see, God had given David a pattern of a new house. And David had given it to Solomon.

And when this house was built, the glory of the Lord was going to come there. A glory such as the people had never seen before was about to come. A glory so profound, the weight of God so real that all flesh would have to bow.

Nobody would even be able to stand and minister. The glory of the Lord was about to come to the temple. But before the glory could come, this man, Joab, who offended the very nature of God, had to be removed.

Can you imagine if God was about to manifest His glory in this physical sanctuary? Let's say this is January. Let's say in March. There was about to be a manifestation of God's glory here, so powerful that nobody would be able to stand.

The choir couldn't sing. The band couldn't play. Pastors couldn't get out of their seats.

Everybody fall on the floor and cry out to God. The glory was going to come. But what if, what if first you had to be taken out of the sanctuary? God says, I will come.

I will manifest my glory. But first, this man, this woman has to be removed from my presence. This stubborn, rebellious, unforgiving man, who is wounding and murdering at will now, has to be taken out of my sanctuary.

What a terrifying prospect that God would look down and say to me, I want to send my glory, but first I've got to get you out of here. Because you will pervert it. You will take it in a wrong direction.

I've got to remove you. You see, the good news is that the glory of God no longer comes in a physical temple. The temple of the Lord is you and me.

We are now the temple of God. Joab is this old, self-willed, unforgiving nature. Every one of us have a Joab nature.

God says, no, I want to send my glory into your temple. But first, this old nature, this root of unforgiveness, this self-willed man, who makes it his duty to determine what's right and wrong, and can even rebuke the king himself, must be taken away. Solomon sent an agent of death into the temple.

And the agent of death is the Holy Spirit, who has the power to put to death this old nature and to make a way for the new. Joab clung to the horns of the altar when the word of the Lord came to him. And right now, as I'm speaking, unforgiveness is clinging to the horns of some altar that's in your heart, and saying, oh, just give me another chance.

Bring me back into the castle as it is. Give me a new name even. Give me a new office.

Just let me live. Unforgiveness will cling. Unforgiveness will try to hold on.

Unforgiveness will try to redefine itself. Unforgiveness will try to deflect from the things that it is and has done. But you see, the Scripture tells us that Joab gave no resistance.

He said, no, let me die here. And folks, I want to suggest that if the glory of the Lord is going to touch your temple, unforgiveness must die here, and it must die today. Joab could have risen up to fight.

He could have tried to get an army. But I don't know where he got the understanding. Somehow he just knew that the jig was up, as we say.

It was over for him. God had come. And in that temple that was about to be built, the glory was going to come.

Folks, the Lord will not send His glory where there is a root of unforgiveness and bitterness. He will not send His glory there. I want to challenge you with everything that's in me, because I do believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ wants to be glorified through His church one more time in our generation.

But He says, I cannot come where unforgiveness is. I cannot come where there are roots of undealt-with bitterness. I cannot come where people are wounding and assassinating one another at will, and arguing with the glory of God.

Joab gave no resistance. And this is the choice that we have to make. It's a choice, folks.

I've labored this today, because as Nathan did to David, he put out a scene before David that David could have agreed with. Then he turned the mirror and said, you are the man. You are the one that I've been speaking about.

The Holy Spirit gave me this to show you what is in your heart. As I've been speaking today, God's Holy Spirit spoke to me this morning during worship that there would be scenes and people would come into

your minds as I speak. And now you have a choice to make.

You let the grievance go. There are over 103 nationalities represented in this sanctuary today. There are people who have come from countries where you resent another tribe.

You resent another culture. You resent another class of people. It's not just one person.

You resent a whole class of people. You've got to let this go, or you'll never know the glory of God. You'll never know it.

I'm not indifferent to what's been done to you, and neither is God. But He took the punishment for what's been done to you upon Himself that you might go free from the chains and the grievances of death. We go into Burundi in the beginning of July, and we're going to plead with the people, two tribes that have formerly slaughtered one another, and we're going to plead to them to be reconciled.

But what hypocrisy if we're not reconciled ourselves? What hypocrisy if a root of bitterness is still in us? What hypocrisy if any of the band members or choir members or leaders who go and stand on that platform are not reconciled to God themselves? We'll be powerless. We will have no - we'll have a forum without power. God forbid, God forbid, God forbid.

The Lord has brought a church into Times Square of over a hundred nationalities to show the world that it is possible to forgive and walk in reconciliation one with another. Let these old grievances go, and let the glory of the Lord come to your temple. Let the glory of the Lord come.

Why would you hold on to these things, these memories of the past? Why would you stand with daggers in your hand and poison on your lips when Christ has made a way for you to be free? Put Joab to death this day. Show him no mercy. Don't let him plead for his life any longer.

The Holy Spirit has come to set this man into a dead eternity. Let him be slain by the power of God. And the glory will come.

The glory. Oh, how God longs to manifest His glory. How He longs to manifest His glory.

He said, My glory I will not share with another. The temple has to be clean. The temple has to be ready.

The temple has to be in agreement with God. I know the Holy Spirit is speaking in this moment. If I've ever known in my entire life the Holy Spirit is speaking.

Let these things go. Let these grievances go. You ask the Holy Spirit to put the sword of God's redemption to these things.

You put them down as the filthy rags that they are and leave them. If anybody gets out of their seat today and comes to this altar, you leave these filthy rags of desiring vengeance at this altar and you walk away. And you never turn back and pick it up again.

You pray for your enemies. You pray that those who have wounded you find grace. You pray God uses them in a greater way than He'll ever use you.

You pray for them. You pray for them every day. You pray for them until God's burden for them becomes your burden.

You let it go and take the burden of God. Oh, would be to God the joy of having done this. What a difference it would have made.

God, I'm sure, would have spared His life and He may have lived to see the glory in Solomon's temple. Instead of being dishonored and buried in the wilderness, which is what happened to Him, He might have been there as an old man to see the manifested glory of God come into the temple. Everything He'd ever fought for all His life would have been realized in that moment.

Oh, Jesus, help us now. God, give us the grace to lay down every grievance, to forgive those that have wronged us, that Your glory can come and touch every life. Oh, God, I thank You.

Take these evil roots out of us. Unwrap these grave clothes from us that we may be free. God, we want to be free.

We want to be a people who are free to love, free to be loved, free to know Your will and Your way. God, help us. Help us to hear this.

I ask it in Jesus' name. As the Holy Spirit has spoken to you today, and you have simply got to let go of a grievance. It might be something that's been in your life for years.

I'm going to ask you as we stand in the annex. You can stand between the screens in the main sanctuary. Meet me here, and we're going to pray a prayer of deliverance and believe God for the victory today.

I'm going to put this thing to death. Let's all stand. The balcony, you can go to either exit.

Make your way here, please, in the sanctuary. Slip out and meet with God. Come and lay it down.

Come and lay it down forever. No fight, no reasoning, no plea bargaining, no deals. Lay it down.

Let it die. Give it up completely. Hallelujah.

Oh, God, thank You, Jesus. I praise Your name. Oh, Lord, I praise Your name.

God, I bless You with everything in me. I bless You, God. Truly, Lord, truly, You're going to send Your glory one more time.

Truly, God, truly, Lord, You're going to manifest Your glory in Your church. You're going to have a bride alive in You, God, speaking words of life, walking with eyes of faith, loins girded with truth. God Almighty, You're going to have a church.

Ambassadors of reconciliation, Lord, all over the world. Oh, Jesus, oh, Jesus, oh, Jesus. You will hear our prayer because we have discarded iniquity from our hearts.

Oh, God, thank You. God, thank You. God, thank You.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. We bless Your holy name today. We declare that Your ways are right.

Your ways are true, oh, God. Your ways are higher than our ways, oh, Lord. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

We will obey You. We will obey You. We will walk in obedience to You, God.

Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Lord. Thank You, God.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Let's take a moment to worship. Let's just worship.

You speak to God. Those that have come to this altar today, you speak to Him now. You tell Him what you need to say.

You let these things go. You need to say names, say names. Whatever you got to do to get it out, get it out.

Just get it out. Offer no mercy to this thing. No mercy.

No mercy today to a bitter spirit. Now everybody who's at this altar this afternoon, you are the temple of the Lord. And the Joab I preached about today is that unforgiving man or woman who's now clinging to the horns of the altar of your heart, begging for mercy.

But in your heart you say today, you will not rob me of the glory of God. You will not take away my spiritual sight. You'll not take away the plan of God for me.

I show you no mercy. You have to have it in your heart today. No mercy for this bitter and unforgiving person.

No mercy. Pray with me now, Lord Jesus Christ. You are the God of this temple and your word alone is supreme to me.

I ask you now, Holy Spirit, to take the sword of God's word. And I agree with you, Lord, that this bitterness and unforgiveness needs to be put to death without mercy and buried in the wilderness. This is what God did to Joab.

And I'm asking you today to do this to me and set my heart free from all these things, from the past, in the present, and things to come. Give me a new heart, the heart of God, to embrace all people equally and to forgive all my enemies. Give me a heart to pray for those who have wronged me.

And God, I ask you even now to forgive them in as much as that's possible and to use them for your glory even in a greater way than you used me. I thank you that my hands are clean now from the shedding of blood. I thank you my lips are clean.

My words are forgiven. I am made brand new, a temple that's ready to receive the glory of God. Oh, God, I'm laying this thing down.

I'm leaving it here. I'm not picking it up again. And I'm not taking it home.

I consider this thing dead. I consider it gone. Lord, you've sent your word and you have destroyed it.

I believe this as Joab was destroyed. So this very moment, by agreeing with God, this root sin in my life is destroyed. I am free from its grip, free from its lies, free from its leading.

Oh, God, fill my heart, fill my mind with your glory. I ask this believing in Jesus' name. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. You have reason to rejoice. You have reason to rejoice.

You have reason to be glad. You have reason to be happy. Hallelujah.

Free, absolutely free. Absolutely free. This is the conclusion of the message.

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