

# (2 Samuel) Bringing Back the Banished

by David Guzik

---

*David is confronted with his own inconsistency in his treatment of Absalom, and is urged to reconcile with him as king and judge.*

**Duration:** 32:52

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 14:1-17

**Topics:** "Gods Mercy", "Forgiveness Through Jesus"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of a widow who comes to King David seeking justice for her son who killed his brother. The preacher highlights how Joab, David's commander, strategically uses this woman's story to appeal to David's sympathy and address his own situation with his rebellious son Absalom. The preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing that God has provided a way for the banished to be brought back to Him through Jesus and His work on the cross. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the urgency to show forgiveness and mercy in our personal relationships, as Jesus taught that the measure of mercy we extend to others will be the measure of mercy we receive from God.

---

## Transcript

This morning we begin in the book of 2 Samuel chapter 14 and if you're thinking, well, you know, the last time I was here on Sunday morning and we were in 2 Samuel, it was way back at chapter 11. And there's a good reason for that. It's because we've also started teaching through the book of 2 Samuel on Wednesday evenings as well.

So this morning I'm going to take verses 1 through 17 of 2 Samuel chapter 14. This Wednesday night I pick it up at verse 18 and we'll continue through all or most of chapter 15 just so you know how we're making our way through the book. And so let's jump right into it.

Second Samuel chapter 14 verse 1. So Joab, the son of Zehariah, perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom. Three people mentioned for us in that very first verse. First there's Joab, the son of Zehariah.

This was the chief general of the armies of King David of Israel, his chief of staff, if you will, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. He directed all of David's armies and Joab, the son of Zehariah, is one of the most interesting and complex people in all of the Bible. We'll talk about him a little bit more as we make our way through the book of 2 Samuel, but you'll get a glimpse into his character today.

And the man's fascinating. He was absolutely loyal to David. Yet there's this brutal streak in him.

There's an amoral streak in him. He's a very interesting man. So that's the first guy mentioned to us in verse 1. Did you see the second one, Joab, the son of Zehariah, perceived that the king's heart.

Well, who's the king? King David, the glorious king of Israel, the greatest king that Israel ever had, King David. And then it says the third person in verse 1, Joab, the son of Zehariah, perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom. Now, Absalom was David's son.

And why would David be concerned about Absalom? Well, very simply put, Absalom was not at home. Absalom was away in exile. He was banished from the kingdom of Israel, both by his choice and by an implied decree of King David.

They say, well, why would David banish his own son? Well, David banished Absalom because Absalom killed his brother. Now that'll get you sent to your room, wouldn't it? Why did Absalom kill his brother? Well, his brother raped his sister. The dysfunctional family didn't begin in the 20th century, folks.

This is one messed up family. And it's messed up. I'll tell you why.

Very plainly because of sin, especially in David's life. David was a glorious king over Israel. He was not a glorious king over his own family.

And when Absalom murdered Amnon in retribution for Amnon's rape of Tamar, Absalom knew I got to get out of town. And so he went to the kingdom of Geshur and he lived among the Geshurites, who were the family of his mother. He hid out for a couple of years, three years, I think it was.

So you know what it was like at the family gatherings. There they're having dinner for the whole family. David throws a dinner, maybe once a month, get together all the kids.

Absalom's not there. Absalom's seat is empty. And David missed him.

After a while, you kind of forget about the fact that, well, a son's murdered. What can you do? He's gone. Oh, but Absalom, he's still alive, but he's not here with us.

He's banished from the kingdom. But then David's saying, how can I bring him back? I mean, look at what he did. So you have this very real conflict in the heart of David between himself and Absalom.

Now one other dynamic I need to mention before we jump into verse two. Absalom is also important to us because he was the rising political star in Israel. You know, those politicians that look great and have a lot of charisma and attract a lot of attention everywhere that they go.

That was Absalom. And Absalom was in exile for this period of years. But people hadn't forgotten about him.

I mean, the buzz around Israel all the time was, well, where's Absalom? When is he coming back? What does he want to do when he comes back? Will Absalom be our next king? Boy, we like Absalom. And as Joab, so loyal to David, thought about it, it concerned him. It concerned him for two reasons.

First of all, he didn't like to see David sad. David would come into the office the next day after one of those family dinners and be so depressed. David, why are you so depressed? Well, you know, we had family

dinner last night and Absalom wasn't there and he'd look how depressed he was.

Joab didn't like that. But there was a protective reason as well. Joab understood that when Absalom was distant, he gained like this aura about him.

He became sort of like an absent Messiah who might come back at any time. He gained in personality and prestige just by his absence. He was sort of a martyr there in exile.

And Absalom is thinking like some gangsters have thought that you should keep your friends close and your enemies even closer. And I get the feeling that Joab didn't quite trust Absalom. And he said, I want this guy close so we can keep an eye on him.

So he says, we got to bring him back. How do we do it? Look at it here in verse two. And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, please pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning apparel.

Do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. Go to the king and speak to him in this manner. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

And we have to wonder why didn't Joab, who had this relationship with David, why didn't Joab just go in to the throne room and say to the king of Israel, David, bring Absalom home. You need to do this, David. I'm your friend.

Just get it done. But I want you to see that Joab did not do that. Joab thought carefully, he said, you know, David would probably reject that his defenses would be up.

And then he thinks, you know, Nathan got to David pretty good using a story. Why don't I try that trick on him? And so he recruits a woman from Tekoa, a widow. And he engineers the whole event to arouse the sympathies of David and then to get David to shift those sympathies towards Absalom.

Look at what I mean here, beginning at verse four. And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself and said, help, O king. Now, do you get the picture? Here's a disheveled, unkept old widow.

Coming into the throne room, bowing down before David and saying, help me, O king. Now, this had to arouse the sympathies of David. Who wants to see an old woman bowing down in such a way that you say this isn't right.

Lady, please get up. You know, come on, let us get you a chair. Don't please.

No. And then you look at her and she's she's unkempt. She's been mourning.

She doesn't look right. And your heart goes out to your sympathies are extended towards this poor woman. You say, lady, please, what can we do to help you? Now, there's something you need to understand that perhaps I should have mentioned earlier, but I hope you can put it into the right context here.

When she comes to David, she's not just coming to the king of Israel. You see, in our form of government, we have what's known as the separation of powers. You know, you have the executive branch of government, you have the judicial branch of government and you have the legislative branch of

government in kingdoms of the ancient world.

There was no separation of powers. There was one power and that was the king. And so David was not only the king, as in the sense of being the president of the country, David was also the final judge in the land.

Do you understand what this widow is doing when she comes and bows herself down before David and cries out, help me, oh, King, she's making an appeal to the Supreme Court. She's saying, David, I'm coming to you as the chief judge of the land, because I didn't get justice at the lower courts, I'm coming to you, David, to bring a proper decision in this matter. Here we are now at verse five, then the king said to her, what troubles you? And she answered, indeed, I'm a widow and my husband is dead.

Can you feel David's heart going out to this poor woman? Verse six, now your maidservant had two sons and the two fought with each other in the field and there was no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant. And they said, deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother, whom he killed.

And we will destroy the heir also. So they would extinguish my ember that is left and leave to my husband, neither name nor remnant on the earth. Joab knew just what to put in the mouth of this woman.

She comes and she gives a story that is similar enough to David's situation that it can be applied, but it's different enough so it wouldn't arouse suspicions. And did you get what the story was? Here's this woman, a widow. She has no husband.

Her husband has passed away. And she has two sons, one son murders the other son. Now, the son who is murdered, of course, is gone.

The son who was the murderer is now a wanted man and other people in the family are crying out for justice against this man who was the murderer. But the woman comes to David and she says, David, if they take this son and give him justice, which means executing him, if they give him justice, then I'm left with nobody, no husband, no sons who will support me, who will carry on the name of my family in Israel. David, please, I want you to extend your hand towards my situation so that my son will be spared.

Again, it was just a brilliant combination of arousing David's sympathy and putting together just the right story so that David will react the way that they wanted him to react. So look at it here in verse eight. Then the king said to the woman, go to your house and I will give orders concerning you.

Ma'am, I'm not going to give my decision today. Go to your house and I'll decide the issue. Verse nine, and the woman of Tekoa said to the king, my lord, oh, king, let the iniquity be on me and on my father's house and the king and his throne be guiltless.

So the king said, whoever says anything to you, bring him to me and he shall not touch you anymore. Then she said, please let the king remember the Lord, your God, and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy any more lest they destroy my son. Please, David, I'd like a decision now.

Please put your royal protection over my only living son. I know he's a murderer, but he's all I've got, David. Won't you please suspend justice for the sake of bringing my son back? Look at what David says in verse 11.

And he said, as the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground. At that moment, as I picture it in my mind, Joab was there sitting off to the side, you know, and he's saying, OK, lady, that's good. That's good.

Pick it up a little bit. Your delivery is getting a little bit slow. Remember, I coached you on this.

As soon as David said that line at the end of verse 11, where he says, as the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground. Joab went, yes. David turns his head, what Joab, you're listening in on this.

Joab just kind of smiles. Because the woman of Tekoa and Joab have David just where they want him. You see what they've gotten David to do, they've gotten David to ignore the cause of justice for the sake of family, sympathy and loyalty.

In other words, David says, forget about justice, this man's a murderer, the law of Moses says he should die. But let's forget about justice. Let's just get along.

Let's let bygones be bygones. Let's wipe the slate clean and be reconciled one to another. Now, look at how the conversation follows, because now the woman of Tekoa gets really bold.

Verse 12. Then the woman said, please let your maidservant speak another word to my lord, the king. And he said, say on.

I can just imagine that David's getting a little suspicious here. What lady? I just decided your case. I gave you what you want.

What else is there? Verse 13. And the woman said, why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? The king speaks this thing as one who is guilty in that the king does not bring his banished one home again. Wow.

You could have heard a pin drop in David's throne room when she said that. David, you're guilty of this. You've got a banished son.

You've got a son who murdered another son. And you're telling me that I should just have this protection over my son and forget about justice for the sake of bringing him back. David, that's what you're failing to do in this situation toward Absalom.

Look at how she continues on. Verse 14. But we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.

Yet God does not take away a life, but he devises means so that his banished ones are not expelled from him. Now, therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord, the king, because the people that made me afraid and your maidservant said, I will now speak to the king. It may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant for the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and for my son together from the inheritance of God.

Your maidservant said the word of my lord, the king will now be comforting, whereas the angel of God, so is my lord, the king in discerning good and evil. And may the Lord your God be with you. She's laying it on pretty thick there at the end, don't you think? But she's getting the point home.

David, you just counseled me and in my situation with my son that we should suspend justice for the sake of reconciliation. David, that's what you should do with Absalom. Now, here's the sixty four thousand dollar question for us this morning.

Was the advice of the woman of Tekoa or maybe we should say Joab. Was the advice of the woman of Tekoa good advice for David that we should suspend justice for the sake of reconciliation? And the answer to that question is yes. And no, let me deal with the yes part first.

Should we suspend justice for the sake of reconciliation? Absolutely, so we should, ladies and gentlemen. In our interpersonal relationships. We should be very gracious, very forgiving towards one another.

We should be rich with reconciliation. We should be very quick to overlook a wrong and to bring about reconciliation between one party and another. We shouldn't be in the place of saying, well, you know, I'm not going to get reconciled with you because I don't have justice from you yet.

No, we should take the advice of the woman of Tekoa. Look at verse 14 again with me, please. Look at her logic.

This is why she's saying, David, this is why you must reconcile with Absalom. She says in verse 14, for we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. You know what she means by that? She's saying our life is like the water in a cup.

And when you spill that water out of the cup and it goes on the ground, you can't get the water up. And you ever spill a glass of water and then you try to collect the water and put it back in the glass and drink it. It doesn't work that way, does it? Because once you spill the water, you can't get it up again, you can't drink it, it's of no use to you for refreshing your thirst anymore.

And what she's trying to tell David is when our life is over, you can't reconcile with people anymore. Some of the saddest funerals or memorials that I've ever done and thank heavens that there haven't been that many that were like this. But some of the saddest ones I've ever done is where where people have not taken the opportunity to reconcile.

And the person passes away with all this baggage between him and the people that they've left behind. And there's a unique kind of grief at those funerals, it's not just the grief of what this person that I love is gone, it's the grief of I never made it right with him. I never patched it up with her.

And now it's gone, it's like the water spilled on the ground, you can't pick it up again. And knowing that should give you and I an urgency to say, let's reconcile now. Let's get it right now.

You don't know what your expiration date is and I don't know what mine is, so let's just make it right now. It's good logic from the woman of Tekoa. And then look at the other thing that she says, this this is the real lightning flash of glory that lights up the whole chapter.

It's in the second part of verse 14. She says, yet God does not take away a life, but he devises means so that his banished ones are not expelled from him. In other words, David, you know how God is.

God finds a way to bring us back to him. God is into reconciliation. When we're far from him, he wants to reconcile us.

David, you should have that heart of reconciliation towards Absalom as well. Do it, David, because when the water spilled out, you can't get it again. Do it, David, because God himself is into reconciliation.

David, reconcile with Absalom. And so was this good advice from the widow of Toccoa? Yes. On a personal level, on the level of interpersonal relationships.

Absolutely. Yes. Ladies and gentlemen.

David did not relate to Absalom only on a personal level. It wasn't just David as a man and Absalom as a man, it wasn't just David as a father and Absalom as a son, if that's all there was to the equation, then David should have jumped on the widow of Toccoa's advice and everything he did else in the rest of the chapter was right. But it wasn't just that.

My friends, David was also the king of Israel, and so it wasn't just David and Absalom, it wasn't just father and son, it was also king and subject. It was also judge and criminal. And friends, on an interpersonal relationship, we should be so generous with forgiveness.

Do you want to know how generous with forgiveness you should be on an interpersonal relationship? Jesus said that the measure of mercy that you use with other people in your personal relationships, that's the measure of mercy that God's going to use with you. Ouch, you better go home and take a look at your measuring cup. You see, what we want is we want the extra big grande scoop of mercy from God, right? We want the super big gold worth of mercy from God, right? And how much mercy are we giving out to other people? We're giving out a shot glass full, a little Demitasse espresso cup full.

You know, it doesn't work that way. You're giving out the little Demitasse espresso cup full of mercy to others. That's how much God's going to give to you.

That's how it works with our interpersonal relationships. But friends. There wasn't just the dynamic of an interpersonal relationship between David and Absalom, do we want our judges to sit behind the bench? The confessed murderer is right in front of him.

And do we want our judges to say, hey, man, let's let bygones be bygones. Do over, go your way. Now, again, there is a clear distinction biblically between the responsibility that a person has as a judge or a king and the responsibility that they have in an interpersonal relationship.

You say, well, wait a minute. I thought that God finds a means to bring his banished ones back to us, back to him. I mean, did you see that in verse 14? I love that phrase.

He devises means so that his banished ones are not expelled from him. And I thought God was a judge. How come God can do it then? Oh, friends, this is what you need to understand.

And more than anything, this is what I want you to grab a hold of with both hands this morning. Yes, God devises means you understand what that means. It means he makes a way God finds a way to bring his banished ones.

Who are the banished ones? I was one. I'm looking out on a whole room full of people who either were banished or are banished because there's only two categories of people in this world. Those who used to be banished from God's presence and those who are.

Because we're born separated from God. And we need the work of God in our life to bring us back to him. God finds a way to bring his banished ones home again.

He makes it so where they are not expelled from him and say, well, how come God can do that? I thought God was a righteous judge. I thought God was a great king. How come he could do it? And David seems to be having a problem with it here.

Friends, this is the whole distinction I want to make is that when God brings back his banished ones, he does not do it by suspending justice. He does it by satisfying justice. And there's a huge difference between the two.

And the reason why I say this is so important for you to grab a hold of, if you're a Christian, this way, you need to understand this probably even more. The world needs to understand this. Do you understand that the way most people in this world, the way they think that God forgives sin goes something like this.

God up in heaven looks down on the sinner and says, oh, shucks, come on home. Oh, so let's let bygones be bygones. It's like in golf.

I'll give you a mulligan. It's like doing something. We'll do a do over.

Don't worry about it. Come on home. Friends, that is not how God forgives sin.

That would be suspending justice. That would make God an unrighteous judge. It would make him a judge that if he sat on the bench of the Ventura County Superior Court, you would be picketing the county hall of justice to have him removed.

God isn't an unjust judge. No, instead, God looks at the guilty sinner in front of him and he says, I've got to devise a means for bringing home my banished ones so that they're not expelled from me. How can I do it? Well, then what I will do is I will take all the guilt, all the punishments, all the shame that their sin has collected, and I will put it on my son.

And I will satisfy justice at the cross, I will not suspend justice, I will satisfy it and it will be satisfied in the finished work of my son. Do you see the difference between the two? It's an absolutely critical difference because the way God does it, it means that he retains his righteousness. Now, this is what David did not do.

David did not bring Absalom home and he said, Absalom, before I do, I will bring you home, before I bring you home, I've got to do two things. First of all, you've got to admit that you're a murderer. Secondly, Absalom, I will pay the penalty for your sin, put the guilt upon me, you just come home.

David did not do those things, manipulated into the situation. You might say that he was painted into a corner. David did not satisfy justice with Absalom, he ignored it.

What we're going to see as we continue on in later studies through the rest of chapter 14 and into 15 and into 16, it's going to bear a bitter fruit for David and the whole kingdom of Israel. Matter of fact, it's going to bear bitter fruit for Absalom. It was not good for Absalom for David to do this.

Friends, I guess. I guess what I really want to leave you with this morning is a is a vital, passionate awareness that God has devised a way to bring the banished back to him, that they might not be expelled from him. But the way is through the person and the work of Jesus and how he stood in the place of guilty

sinner as he hung on the cross and received the punishment that I deserved and that you deserved.

Totally righteous. It was a glorious satisfaction of justice. Not a suspension of it.

So we leave with two lessons. One is the glorious way that God has satisfied justice for those who put their faith in him, for those who accept the finished work of Jesus Christ as counting on their behalf. The payment is there.

You have to accept it. The second great lesson that we're left with is the urgency that we have to get it right in our personal relationships, do we not? Is there not a personal relationship in your life where you need to just let go of it? You see, here's our problem. In our personal relationships, we want to act like a judge.

I am the judge and you have committed a crime against me and by the court of me. I condemn you to 30 years hard labor in bitterness and rejection from me. In the court of me, I will not receive you again until you grovel before me and admit you're wrong and take all the blame upon yourself.

I've got news for you. You're not a judge. God didn't put you in that place, so receive that person.

Be generous with mercy and forgiveness. That's the that's the measure you want from God, isn't it? The big one, not the little one. Let's pray and ask God to confirm these things in our heart.

I, I pray that if there's somebody in your life that you need to forgive. Or if you need to fix this sense in your heart that you're banished from God, I won't ask for a show of hands, but I know for certain there must be some people here this morning you feel banished from God. You feel like he's pushing you away.

Doesn't have to be that way. God's made the way for you to come back to him. You just have to receive it by faith.

And so, father, that's my prayer for this wonderful congregation this morning, I thank you for them. How wonderful it is, Lord, that they listen so attentively to your word. What a gift it is, Lord, to have such a such a congregation that wants to hear your word.

But father, I pray now that you would make them more than hearers, but doers of your word, doers of your word, Lord, towards those with whom they need to affect or initiate a reconciliation. And Lord, doers of your word when it comes, Lord, to the coming home from that sense of banishment, bring us home to you, Jesus, fill us with your spirit, heal our wounds. And make us right with you and with others, we pray this in Jesus name, amen.

Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10706.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-guzik/2-samuel-bringing-back-the-banished/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**