

(2 Samuel) Fighting to Keep Unity

by David Guzik

King David faces a rebellion led by Sheba, which tests his loyalty and unity with his people.

Duration: 49:22

Scripture: 2 Samuel 8:17-18, 2 Samuel 20:18-22, 2 Samuel 23:26, Ephesians 4:1-3

Topics: "Leadership Lessons", "Civil War"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a story from the Bible about a wise woman who saves her city from a siege. The woman approaches Joab, a military leader, and proposes a solution to the impending destruction of their city. She suggests killing a troublemaker and throwing his head over the wall, which ultimately leads to the enemy army withdrawing. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not being swayed by catchy slogans and the potential dangers of following popular ideas without caution. The sermon also highlights the challenges faced by David, who is dealing with civil war and questioning his own worthiness as a leader.

Transcript

2 Samuel chapter 20. We saw the last time we were in 2 Samuel chapter 19 that David, because the hand of God was upon him, escaped. We would say narrowly escaped, but when God is with you, how can you have a narrow escape? I mean, your victory is assured when God is with you.

And and he had a remarkable escape and restoration to the throne from the infamous rebellion of his son, Absalom. Well, you might think that that would end the issue and everybody would say, well, David's the king and let's be secure in that it didn't. Turmoil has a way of stirring up turmoil.

You know, there's such thing as momentum in these things, and, you know, one problem can stir up another problem. And this is what happened. We saw at the end of 2 Samuel chapter 19 that when David was being welcomed back into Israel as the king being received as the king.

That the tribe started fighting amongst each other over who had the right or the legitimacy to honor David more. And the division was between Judah and the other ten tribes of Israel. Levi was sort of counted as a neutral tribe in this Levi's.

Well, this sort of division between Judah and the other ten tribes is going to be inflamed into another brief civil war beginning here at 2 Samuel chapter 20, verse one. And there happened to be a rebel whose

name was Sheba, the son of Bikri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet and said, we have no share in David, nor do we have any inheritance in the son of Jesse.

Every man to his tent, so Israel. So every man of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba, the son of Bikri. But the men of Judah from the Jordan, as far as Jerusalem remained loyal to their king.

Well, there happened to be a rebel. The rebels name was Sheba, and Sheba took advantage of David's weakened position after Absalom's failed rebellion. He also took advantage of the conflict that was exposed when David came back to power.

That argument between Judah and the other ten tribes that we found at the end of 2 Samuel 19. Well, here it's being fanned into a greater flame. Maybe it was a smoldering ember at the end of 2 Samuel 19.

Here it's burning. He based his rebellion, I think, on three principles that are common to rebels. First of all, notice what he said in verse one.

We have no part in David. Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse. Sheba denied the king's sovereignty.

Oh, David's a king, just not over me, just not over us. He claimed that David had no right to reign over him or the ten tribes of Israel. The next thing he said in verse one, we have no part or share in David, nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse.

Now, do you notice that he called David the son of Jesse? And you might say, well, that's just a descriptive title of David. No, it isn't. Who was Jesse? Well, you say it was David's father.

Yes, but what kind of man was he? Was he a wealthy, influential man? No, he was a humble farmer. Yeah, here's farm boy. We don't have any part in the farmer's son, is what he's saying.

It's a slap at David. So rebels deny the king's sovereignty. They devalue the king's identity and then next they decide to go their own way.

That's what he says at the end of verse one. Every man to his tents. Oh, Israel.

He decided to go his own way and he drew others with him. He acted on his low opinion of David. I just point that out because I think that's common to rebels everywhere.

When you have people who are in rebellion against the Lord, don't they follow the same pattern? First, they deny the king's sovereignty. Oh, yeah, God's God. Just not over me.

God's a great king, just just not over me. And then they devalue the king's identity. They make God smaller, just like Sheba wanted to make David smaller by calling him the son of a farmer.

And then next you decide to go your own way, every man to his tents, do your own thing. Well, this was the message of this rebel named Sheba. I found it interesting that G. Campbell Morgan, the great Bible commentator of about 100 years ago, he saw something interesting in that phrase.

We have no share in David, nor do we have an inheritance in the son of Jesse. He considered that to be sort of like a slogan that Sheba used. And he says that the story should teach us that popular and plausible catch words ought to be received and acted upon with great caution.

Don't get suckered by slogans. You know, a clever or catchy slogan can make a bad idea very attractive. And I think that's what Sheba did.

He he was a great marketer. He knew how to package things. And so what happened? Well, look, verse two.

So every man of Israel deserted David. Sheba succeeded in drawing away the ten northern tribes. And David had another civil war on his hands to deal with.

You know, you wouldn't blame David for saying, where does it end? Well, what's going on with this? You know, on the one hand, you would look at David and and you would want to sympathize with David. David comes to you and he says, look, what's wrong with me? Well, what's going on here? Is this my fault? And what would you say to David if he asked you, is this my fault? Look, first with Absalom and now with Sheba, are all these civil wars my fault? You know what you'd say to David if you had some godly wisdom, I think, is on the one hand, you'd say, well, no, David, it's not your fault. You didn't make Absalom do this.

Absalom's responsible for what he did. He didn't make Sheba do this. Sheba is a political demagogue.

He's great with the catchy slogans and campaign business and all of that. But you didn't make Sheba do what he did. Then you would turn around and you'd put your arm on David's shoulder and you'd say, but David, you did cause this.

I mean, what was there in your life, David, that the Lord is dealing with through these things? I mean, even if it's not a direct cause and effect thing, God is allowing this for a purpose. What is the purpose? And David might say, well, you know, the Lord did say that he would allow trouble to come into my life after my sin with Bathsheba. God has a chastening purpose for this.

Isn't it curious how you could say to David, well, it's not your fault at all. And you'd be right. But on the other hand, well, David, it's not your fault.

But there is a purpose in this for you from God. Don't think for a moment, David, that you're just some sort of victim of blind circumstance or wicked men. God is still the Lord of your life, David.

This great struggle that you went through with Absalom, did it not pass through the hands of God first? This great difficulty that you're in right now with Sheba, David, did not God allow this to pass through his watchful gaze before it came to you, even if you would not say God is the instigator of it, because God is never the author of sin. Yet at the very least, you must say that God allowed it. At the same time, it does it does reveal the true depravity and fickle character of men.

We look back on it now and you think about it and you say there was no greater king over Israel than David. I mean, he was Israel's greatest king. Hands down.

Oh, there were some other great ones. Solomon flashed with moments of greatness. Certainly other ones like King Josiah had their moments.

Hezekiah had their times of greatness of their kingdom over God's people. But David is often a category of his own. Yet this is a man who had to endure not one, but two civil wars.

And he was not so appreciated in his own day. The fickleness of the crowd is what it was. Remember what it was at the end of Second Samuel, chapter 19? Judah and the ten tribes of Israel are fighting against

each other to see who gets to honor David more.

Well, we love him more. No, we love him more. No, we love him more.

And then now in chapter 20, the ten tribes are saying we don't love him at all. The crowd's fickle, folks. The same crowd yelling, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

A similar crowd just a few days later was chanting with even more passion, crucify him. That's the fickleness of the crowd. You might say that it is in the nature of men, and I don't mean to exclude the women from that.

I mean, it is the nature of humanity. It is in the nature of men to divide. We have to be held together by the Holy Spirit.

I think that the Church of Jesus Christ is hands down the most remarkable institution on the face of the earth. If you look around yourself tonight, look at the other people in this room. Well, more than half of them, you would never do anything with those people in your daily life for anything else.

We come from different backgrounds. We come from different nations. We come from different careers.

We come from different places. We come from all different kinds of things. And, you know, we come together as the Church of Jesus Christ.

We're like we're one. We're a body. But yet we have to be held together by the Holy Spirit because it's in our fallen nature to divide.

It's in our fallen nature to fragment. But you remember what Paul put it like in Ephesians chapter four. Let me read that to you.

Ephesians chapter four, verses one through three, where Paul said, I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy with the worthy of the calling with which you are called with all lowliness and gentleness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I love how he puts that. Did Paul say that our job was to create the unity? No, you don't create the unity in the body of Christ.

No, the Holy Spirit has granted the unity. What do we have to do? Keep it. He's given it.

We keep the unity and we keep it because we know that in our fallen nature, it's just within us to fragment. It's within us to divide and we keep what the Holy Spirit's created. Well, for as divisive as the ten tribes of Judah were, did you see there at the end of verse two, what it says about the loyalty of the tribe of Judah, where it says, but the men of Judah from the Jordan, as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king.

The desertion of the ten tribes is distressing, but the loyalty of the men of Judah is encouraging. And I would say this, when other people desert or divide, it gives you a greater opportunity to demonstrate loyalty. Day in and day out, Judah was loyal to David, right? But who cared? Most of the time, it's like, yeah, you're loyal to David.

So is everybody else who cares? No, but when the ten tribes divide, then suddenly the loyalty of the tribe of Judah shines and you say that that's really something about those guys. You see, again, when others desert or divide, it gives us a greater opportunity to demonstrate loyalty. And I think we should we should

really imitate the loyalty Judah showed to their king.

We should sow the same loyalty to our king. Now, can't you imagine men from the tribe of Judah being mocked by the people of Israel from the ten tribes? You're King David. Man, he got disgraced by his son.

We heard about that big scandal with Bathsheba. He's an old man. His years are behind him.

Look at Sheba. Man, now that man's got his stuff together. Did you hear this slogan? We have no part in David and no inheritance in the sons of Jesse.

Man, that guy's sharp. Well, you know, when we stand by King Jesus, we should be willing to endure some mockery for it. Next week, we can think of them.

Having to stay loyal to David, despite the inner desire, perhaps sometimes to want to do what the other people are doing. And we must be loyal to Jesus in spite of the rebellion of the flesh within us, and we must be loyal to Jesus in spite of the times when he seems distant loyalty, loyalty to Jesus. How wonderful it is.

Well, verse three, now David came to his house in Jerusalem and the king took the ten women, his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house and put them in seclusion and supported them, but did not go into them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living in widowhood. This is tragic.

These ten concubines. And again, I've tried to explain to you before what the arrangement of I think you would call it concubinage was in ancient Israel. It was sort of a legitimate legal mistress.

A concubine was a woman that had to be exclusively loyal to you as in a marriage commitment. You know, you enjoyed intimate relations with this woman. You supported her.

Her children were part of your family. But the child of a concubine did not have the same status as the child of a wife. It was essentially a way to add women to your harem, so to speak, without diminishing the inheritance you would give to all your sons.

You see, that's kind of the problem, right? You really want to have ten women, but you don't want to divide the inheritance among 30 sons. So what you do is you take three women and make them your wives and then you have seven women in there, your concubines. Boy, this is awkward to talk about, isn't it? This is King David, right? But, you know, he never touched these concubines again.

Why? Because these are the concubines whom Absalom raped. He disgraced he. He made them the unfortunate victims of his sin.

And friends, it's sad to consider how, you know, other people often have to suffer because of our sin. And that was the case with these poor women. Well, you got this rebellion going on, what's David going to do about it? Well, you call up the chief of staff of your army.

Get me a Masa right now. David picks up the hotline, the red phone. Get me a Masa.

Here he comes. Verse four. Then the king said to a Masa, assemble the men of Judah for me within three days and present and be present here yourself.

So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah, but he delayed longer than the set time which David had appointed him. I think this is interesting for a couple of reasons. First of all, who is not the commander in chief of David's armies? Joab, remember Joab, Joab's been with David for a long, long time.

Well, how come it's Amasa now and not Joab? Well, because David fired Joab for two reasons. First of all, Joab killed Absalom when David told him not to. Secondly, Joab.

Was he excuse me, it wasn't Joab so much, it was he wanted to make a gesture of reconciliation to the supporters of Absalom and Amasa used to be Absalom's chief general. And so he says, well, great, I'll get rid of Joab and I'll make a gesture of reconciliation. Joab, you're out Amasa, you're in.

And so he says, give me my army and get them here quick. We've got a rebellion going on. Now, again, what's very interesting about this is it's a reflection on the unwise advice that Absalom took.

Remember when Absalom was figuring out how to crush David in the midst of this rebellion and he got together his counselors and the first guy that he got together, Ahithophel, was a very wise man and he gave Absalom very wise advice. He said, you go out quickly and crush these men. You just go right for David, cut the rebellion off at his head and that's all there is to it.

And it's over. Well, he didn't listen to the wise advice of Ahithophel, he listened to the deliberately bad advice of Hushai the Archite, who was in his cabinet as a mole. Again, does this strike you as all just a bit complicated? Do you know why it's a bit complicated? Because it's real life.

Made up stories, you know, they don't always come out this complicated, but this is real life. Well, again, David, when he's faced with this rebellion, he doesn't have to ask anybody's counsel, right? Do you do a quick strike or do you take your time and build up a big army? No, David says, quick strike Amasa, give me the army and get it for me right away. But Amasa wasn't apparently such a great leader.

Look at it there in verse five. So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah, but he delayed longer than the set time which David had appointed him. I've got a theory, I want you to file this away in your mind and see if it proves before we're done with the end of the chapter.

I have a theory that the men of the army of Judah didn't think much of Amasa. Who did they want as general? Joab, blood and guts, Joab, you know, the guy who was just there and their man for all this time. I mean, that's the kind of man these are.

And so they get the news. Amasa says, gather the army. And they look at the message, you know, as it comes in, the message slip.

And he says, well, I haven't called back. Amasa is having trouble getting up an army, maybe he's not respected by the man. And so he just can't get the army together quickly.

So what happens in verse six, David knows he has to move quickly. And David said to Abishai, now Shiva, the son of Neri, will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your Lord's servants and pursue him.

Let's find for himself fortified cities and escape us. And David said, look, I know because I got away because Absalom gave me time. We're given no time to this guy.

Take the palace guard. That's what he said. The king's servant.

That's what he means. Take the palace guard and go out after this guy. Now, when you think of the palace guard, you're not thinking of, you know, you know, a detachment of a dozen mall cops.

You're talking about the baddest dudes in the kingdom is what you're talking about. These were the elite forces. And he says, forget about amassing a huge army.

We'll go with a smaller army. But quick. And these guys are the toughest soldiers in all the land.

So I go get these guys. So verse seven, so Joab's men with the Cherithites, the Pellethites and all the mighty men went out after him and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue Shiva, the son of Vickery. Here we are war again.

Now it seems like Joab is heading this detachment, but over Joab as Abishai. David has really busted the rank of Joab, right? It's no longer General Joab. You know, now it's a major Joab or whatever it is.

He's down a few strikes. So verse eight, when they were at the large stone, which is in Gibeon, Amasa came before them. Well, now you get the picture here.

Amasa is commander in chief of all the armies. And he says, well, there's some sort of troops coming. At least Joab and Abishai were able to get him.

I better get to where the battle is going to be. I mean, I'm the leader. They've got to follow me.

I got to catch up to them. And so Amasa gets there. They were at the large stone, which is in Gibeon.

Verse eight, Amasa came before them. Now, Joab was dressed in battle armor. On it was a belt with a sword fastened in its sheath at his hips.

Are they picturing all this? He's got all his armor on. He's got the sword right there. And as he was going forward, it fell out accidentally.

No accident to it at all. He tips the scabbard. It falls out on the ground.

Whoops. I don't have a sword as I'm going up to greet my brother Amasa. Now, Amasa thinks, good, because the combination of Joab and swords and close proximity made anybody nervous, especially Amasa, because this is the guy who took Joab's job.

All right, you're going to have a little disgruntled employee action here. And so he's thinking, good, no, no sword. It fell out.

Well, ha ha. Did you see this? Verse nine, then Joab said to Amasa, are you in health, my brother? Now, that should have been a tip off right there. Blood and guts, Joab doesn't talk like this to people.

Are you? How are you feeling? Are you in health, my brother? And Joab took him by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. This was a familiar gesture. You would just sort of put your hand, you know, sort of behind just a close intimate, you know, you do like, you know, like, well, this was like really like an Italian kiss.

It was like the kiss of death at what it was, you know? And so he goes forward to give him a kiss. Look at it here. Verse ten.

But Amasa did not notice the sword that was in Joab's hand. Oh, in other words, you go forward with your right hand. Now, the custom was the right hand was the one that you used in battle.

And if a guy could use his left hand in battle, that was remarkable. So you would never expect an attack from the left hand. So here they are coming close.

Amasa is going through the inventory. Joab's close to me. Disgruntled employee, blood and guts, Joab, swords on the ground.

Fine. Right hand is right up here by my beard. I'm OK.

But what's the left hand doing? Verse ten, he did not notice the sword that was in Joab's hand and he struck him with it in the stomach and his entrails poured out on the ground and he did not strike him again. Thus he died. Then Joab and Abishai, his brother, pursued Sheba, the son of Bichri.

Wow. How are you, my brother? Right up there through the guts. I am more and more fascinated by this guy, Joab, the more I read about him.

This this dude is something. And you know what? I can't say that I have any confidence that we'll meet Joab in heaven. I can't say with confidence that we won't.

But man, I tell you, he sounds like an interesting guy to talk to, at least from a distance. And, you know, Joab said, dude, you took my job. But not only that, you know, again, this is the amazing complexity of this guy, Joab.

I refuse to believe that this was just a disgruntled employee. You took my job. I'm going to kill you.

The other dynamic about Joab that's amazing is this man was fiercely loyal to David. I mean, almost insanely loyal. And when he looked at Amasa, I don't think he saw primarily the guy who took his job.

You know what he saw? He saw the guy who was Absalom's general. And he said, I'm never going to forgive you for that. And I don't trust you with my king.

You turned on him before. You might just turn on him again. I'm not going to take that chance.

There you go. And so he's lying on the ground, dying. As you see here, verse 11, meanwhile, one of Joab's men stood near Amasa and said, whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab.

You get that? This is where I get the hint. That the guys didn't respect Amasa, but they did Joab. I think the soldiers were stoked.

I think they were standing around saying, you know, three cheers for Joab. We've got our general back. Yes.

And they were all happy about that. And then if you notice here, verse 12, then Amasa wallowed in his blood while in the middle of the highway. Apparently, he didn't die right away.

By the way, one old commentator, Adam Clark, from about 1750, 1760. He says it's very likely that Amasa did not immediately die. I've known instances of persons living several hours after their bowels have been shed out.

And so thank you, Adam Clark, for that. So you just picture Amasa wallowing on the ground here, you know, his gut spilled out, you know, and when the man saw that all and when the men saw that all the people stood still, he moved Amasa from the highway to the field and threw a garment over him when he saw that everybody who came upon him halted. Well, it's like a car crash on the freeway.

You know, we've got to go get Sheba and everybody wants to stop by and gawk at this, you know, get him out of the road, throw a blanket over and we've got to move on. This is a real tender bunch here. David's mighty men.

It's just amazing. You can't make this. You can't make stuff this good up.

It just has to be real. Verse 13, when he was moved from the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba, the son of Bichri. And he went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel and Beth Mahal and to the Baraites, they gathered together and also went after Sheba.

Then they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth Mahal and they cast up a siege mound against the city and it stood by the rampart. And all the people who were with Joab battered the wall to throw it down. Did he get the picture here? They're chasing Sheba and what David feared happened, what what did David say back in verse six, take a look at it, he says, because of this delay of Amasa and getting the troops together, he says, now Sheba, the son of Bichri, will do us more harm than Absalom.

Take your Lord's servants and pursue him, lest he find for himself fortified cities and escape us. Well, that's exactly what he was able to do. Sheba was able to escape to a fortified city.

And in those days, that was the greatest defense people could have was a fortified city with an elaborate system of walls. You've seen the movies of, you know, some medieval kind of movie where you have the great army coming against the castle and all the difficulties they have of trying to assault the castle. Well, as I mentioned this, it just kind of occurs to me that I've never seen one of those movies where they fail to conquer the castle.

But you should know that they were into building castles because lots of times the army never did succeed in going over those impenetrable walls and the system of defenses that cities would have in those days with walls and the system of defenses. It was sophisticated and you could survive an attack from an army. And you can just imagine Joab and all the troops are just mad.

They're disgusted. He got away. He escaped into that city and Joab just comes in, like I say, blood and guts.

Joab, he says, we're tearing that city down. That wall is not standing before us. Make the battering rams.

And so that's what the men of David do. They get together, they make battering rams and they say, we're going to lay siege to this city. Now, are you familiar with the ancient practice and warfare of laying siege to a city? Basically, what you would do is you would surround the city with your armies and you would allow nothing to come in, nothing to go out, and you would both try to get through the walls if you could.

If you couldn't, you just starve them out. There are records in ancient history of cities being under siege for five or 10 years, and it was just a big waiting game because you knew you don't let anything in. You don't let anything out.

Eventually, you're going to starve to death. Eventually, they're going to give in, they can't last forever. You know, there's only so many vegetable gardens that you can have in the midst of this walled city and they're going to be gone pretty soon.

And so, you know, can you imagine how the people of the city of Abel felt when they saw their city being taken under siege? They're like, oh, great. You know, we got months or years ahead of us of an agonized existence. You know, everything's going to be ruined in our lives because of this guy, Shiva.

It doesn't look good for them. Well, then a woman, a wise woman, verse 16, how many great things happen in this world because a wise woman decides to do something? I can't hear that description of a wise woman without thinking of my wife. Anyway, verse 16, then a wise woman cried out from the city here.

Here, please say to Joab, come nearby that I may speak with you. And when he had come near to her, the woman said, are you Joab? And he answered, I am. Then she said to him, hear the words of your maidservant.

And he answered, I'm listening, you know, blood and guts drive. You don't have time for this. Get to the point, lady.

I'm listening. Verse 18. Then she spoke, saying they used to talk in former times, saying they shall surely ask counsel at Abel.

And so they would end disputes. I am among the peaceable and faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city and a mother in Israel.

Why would you swallow up the inheritance of the Lord? And Joab answered and said, far be it, far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy. That is not so. But a man from the mountains of Ephraim, Sheba, the son of Bichri by name, has raised his hand against the king, against David.

Deliver him only and I'll depart from the city. And the woman said to Joab, watch, his head will be thrown to you over the wall. Now, is that swell or what? This is great.

You know, this lady's saying, OK, Joab, look, you know, take it. What do we you're going to do a great city. Look, we're on the list of Israel's outstanding cities.

You know, year seven hundred and forty two B.C. Actually, it's about a thousand B.C. You want a good way to keep Bible timeline in your mind. Associate the reign of David with a thousand years before Christ. I mean, that's right about the time David reigned, a thousand years before Christ.

So you're talking about about a thousand B.C. here. So anyway, you know, she says, listen, you don't take it out on us. And Joab says, look, lady, nothing personal, but you've got this guy Sheba in here and you know me and you know these mighty men out here.

They don't take nothing from anybody. So you you deliver him to us and we're gone. That's all we care about.

OK, you're going to see his head be flung over the wall, you know, pretty soon. Verse twenty two. Then the woman in her wisdom went to all the people and they cut off the head of Sheba, the son of Bikri and threw it out to Joab.

This is great. Aren't you glad sometimes you don't have the illustrated Bible? You can just see that that head catapulting over the wall, you know, just falling down at the feet of Joab. I would love to hear the speech, you know.

You know, she's saying, OK, well, look, here's the deal. We can endure two or three years of a horrible siege in which many of us and our children will die and it'll be a horrible time. And all those great fields and crops that you've worked so hard to build up and maintain and all the flocks and pastures you have out in the land surrounding the city, man, that's gone.

This army, they're going to eat it up in three weeks. Or we can just grab this troublemaker, cut off his head and throw it over the wall. OK, let's have a vote.

And I don't think that took very long at all, do you think? I think that made a run on the first pass. And while the head comes over the wall, verse twenty two, then he blew a trumpet and they withdrew from the city, every man to his tent. So Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

I think what's fascinating about this is a few things to think. First of all. I like to get inside the mind of Sheba here.

And as he escapes and gets within the walls of that city, knowing that that's exactly where David did not want him to be, he probably sits back and thinks, I'm safe. I'm safe inside of here. You know, no one is safe when they run against God's will.

You can't. Sheba thought he was fighting David and he wasn't. He was rebelling against God.

You know, the point of it all, folks, is never to get our own will going and then try to talk God into it by prayer. The whole point of it is to find out what God wants to do, to find out where he's going, and then you go with that. There isn't a wall high enough, there isn't a wall strong enough to protect you against God if you go against his will.

It's just not going to happen. And then let me make another analogy here, it was suggested in a commentary that I read by the great Puritan commentator, John Trapp. He made a spiritual analogy out of Sheba, his rebellion and his refuge in the city of Abel.

He said that within every man, every man's life or body is like a city with walls around it. Every sin is like a Sheba that lives inside of you. Every sin is a traitor against the king that lives inside of you.

And what does God want? Does God want to destroy the city? No, God just says, cut the head off that thing and throw it out to me. And then it's over. Sometimes people feel like God is laying siege to them.

Oh, God, you've surrounded me, you're starving me out. I have no freedom. Everything's, you know, just wasting away.

They feel like God is laying siege to them. Can you get this picture in your mind of a city under siege? That's how God's treating me. You know what he's doing? He sees a sin inside of you.

He sees a traitor inside of you. What does he want you to do? Cut the head off of that thing and throw it out to me. Then God says, great.

I never wanted to destroy the city. I want the city to live and to prosper. But get that traitor out.

Deliver the head of the traitor to me. Isn't that a vivid metaphor? Let me ask you something. Knowing Joab, knowing David, knowing David, knowing the mighty men that surrounded that city.

What would have happened if they would not have cut the head off the traitor and delivered it to the army of Joab? Then surely is anything that city would fall. Now, that's not what Joab wanted, but he said, look, I'll take the city down, but I don't want to. You cut the head off the traitor and deliver it to me.

Maybe that's God's word to you tonight about some sin in your life, a sinful habit, a place of compromise, and maybe it's a place of compromise known only to you. Other people know about this in your life, but to them, it seems like no big deal. But the Holy Spirit's contesting with you about it.

So what do you do? Regard it as a traitor and you must be like that wise woman. Weigh the two of you. OK, the city can fall or we can just cut the head off the traitor and deliver it to the king.

All right, we'll do that. There we go. Well, that ended the rebellion of Sheba.

But it did not end the rift between the tribe of Judah and the ten northern tribes. This rift is going to come into play later. Now, never again during the reign of King David and not during the reign of King Solomon.

Things were fine during Solomon's reign. You know why? Because it was a time of economic boom in Israel. And, you know, when everybody's making money, everybody's happy, except the thing they were not happy about under the reign of Solomon.

They weren't happy about their taxes. They didn't like that. Solomon taxed them.

And I said, yeah, all right. We're all making a lot of money, but, man, we're paying a lot of taxes, too. So what happens when Solomon's successor comes to the throne? Rehoboam? Rehoboam gets counsel from the old men in his kingdom, you know, the counselors that were there for Solomon and such.

Guys, what should I do? And they say, listen, Rehoboam, you've got to lessen the tax load on the people. It's killing them. Yeah, I know.

But we need the economic stimulus package because Solomon is not around anymore. And we've got to keep the economy going. So put more money into the people's pockets.

They have more discretionary income. They were supply side economic theorists. And they said, lower the taxes and you're going to make the people happy and the economy will grow just fine and things will be good.

That's what we need you to do. You know, Rehoboam said to the wise old counselors, he had get out of here. And he called in a bunch of the young Turks, the young guns in the kingdom of Israel.

Hey, guys, what do you think I should do? Oh, man, forget about the advice of those old guys. We'll tell you what to do. You go up to the people and you say, yeah, my father Solomon taxed you a little.

I'm going to tax you a lot. It's going to feel like he was beating you with sticks. I'm going to beat you with scorpions.

You know, the taxes under my dad sting like you were getting hit with a stick. Taxes under me are going to sting. Like you're getting hit with scorpions.

Well, what was the reaction of the people? Civil War, the ten northern tribes said, forget about this. And from that point on, there was never a united kingdom in Israel. Do you realize for most of Israel's history and the kingdom of Israel lasted, let's just say, roughly 500 years for only the first hundred years or so was it a united kingdom? After that first hundred years, you had the divided kingdom of Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

Now, which of those two nations was more godly? Well, let me put it to you this way. The southern kingdom of Judah had a checkered history of kings, you know, a checkerboard is, you know, you have white spaces and black spaces. Well, this was a checkered history of the kings.

Some of the kings were good. Some of the kings were bad. And you will find some great wicked kings in greatly wicked kings, I should say, in Judah's history.

And you find some very godly kings in Judah's history. Well, the northern king of Israel did not have a checkered history of kings, it wasn't like the checkerboard with some squares white and with one square, some squares black in the history of the northern king of Israel, the whole board was black. There was not a single godly king that ever came from the northern kingdom of Israel.

And so this laid the groundwork for it. You see it way back, even within the reign of David. All right, let's finish the chapter now, verse 23.

And Joab was over all the army of Israel. Then Ananiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites. These were David's personal guard.

This was the, you know, the elite truce there in his kingdom. Verse 24, Adoram was in charge of the revenue. He headed up the treasury department.

Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was the recorder. He was the state secretary. Verse 23, Sheba was the scribe, historian.

Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. These were the high priests running the temple and the rituals. Then it says, verse 26, and Ira the Jerite was a chief minister under David.

Now, this is an interesting phrase that it uses there in verse 26. And I could preach a whole sermon on verse 26. Look at that again.

Ira the Jerite was a chief minister under David. And well, you're stretching it, Guzik, you've lost it now. How can you get a sermon out of verse 26? Well, understand when it says chief minister there.

The phrase really has in mind of a personal priest, actually, is kind of the idea. The way some people translate it, I like what Adam Clark says about it here. He says a chief minister.

The idea behind it is that Ira was sort of a chaplain to the king. He was probably a sort of a domestic chaplain to the king, said Adam Clark. So where do you get the sermon from? Verse 26.

All right. Think about David. Man after God's heart, right? The sweet psalmist of Israel.

This man needed devotional help. I mean, if anybody did not need devotional help, it was David. Man after God's heart, the sweet psalmist of Israel.

But his devotional life was so important that he appointed a man to be his personal chaplain. Now, you know what the chaplain does? The chaplain just kind of helps you with your walk with God. You know, you can just see Ira the Jerite hanging out with David.

David, how's it going? Did you have your time with the Lord today? What are you praying about right now? Let's pray together. You see that going on in Ira the Jerite's life and his ministry to David. He was the family chaplain, the personal chaplain to David.

Checking in with him, seeing how he's doing. I see Ira the Jerite reading a scroll that was really good. He goes, man, this ministered to me.

David, read this. You need to read this one. This one was really good.

It really touched my heart and awakened me to God. I see Ira the Jerite and David having long, beautiful fellowship, just conversations, not so much about theological topics or world events, but sharing their own walk with God, one with another. Don't you love it when the Lord is doing this in your life and all that? Now, again, do you get the point here? If David needed that.

How about you? How about me? Reese, excuse me, not Reese Howells. The name is escaping me just for a moment. It's Roy Hesson who wrote the great book, *The Calvary Road*, which has been a great devotional book for me and for others.

He wrote something in there that really struck me. He talks about the danger of having an excessive spiritual privacy. Where basically your attitude is, look, man, my relationship with God is private.

That's it. You've got no business to you know, I don't talk about that with anybody. That's kind of a dangerous place to be.

Do you know why it's dangerous? Well, let me put it to you this way. Not not too long ago, there was a company in America, a big corporation called Enron. And Enron liked to keep something private.

It's books, it's financial dealings. They did not want to open them up to accounting and accountability. And you know what? When you never let anybody look at the books, it's easy to cheat on them, right? It's easy to fudge.

And I think that Ira, the Gerite in David's life was was an accountability thing. Oh, I don't think it was a heavy thing. I don't think he gave David a list of 10 things to do every day.

You know, and he slapped him on the wrist when he you know, it wasn't like that. But it was somebody that David could talk to about his own walk with the Lord. And do you have somebody like that? Do you have somebody in your life that you can talk honestly, transparently about your walk with Jesus? No, not about your opinion about theological things.

That's a lot easier to find. And I'm not saying that's bad, but it's not an Ira, the Gerite in your life. You need a chaplain.

You need someone that you can share it with. If David needed it, so do we. Father, bring those people to us.

I guess, Lord, what we first need is we need you to build within us and us to receive the heart that wants it. We know, Lord, it's just not your pattern to lead us in such things when our heart resists it. So, Lord, give us hearts that want it and then bring those people to us.

Father, keep us from an excessive sense of spiritual privacy. Lord, we all know that there's going to come a day when we will have to give account for everything. Help us to be open with the right people, with some people about the books of our life right now.

So that, Lord, we'll have nothing to be ashamed of when we stand to give account before you on that day. We pray this, Lord, in Jesus name. Amen.

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