

April 19, 2026 - 2 Samuel 14:1-15:37 - "Covenant Discipline"

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[0 : 00] Turn to 2 Samuel chapter 14, starting in verse 1. Now Joab, the son of Uriah, knew that the king's heart went out to Absalom.

! And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, So Joab put the words in her mouth.

When the woman of Tekoa came to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and said, and paid homage and said, Save me, O king.

And the king said to her, What is your trouble? She answered, Alas, I am a widow. My husband is dead. And your servant had two sons.

And they quarreled with one another in a field. And there was not one to separate them. And one struck the other and killed him. And now the whole clan has risen against your servants.

[1 : 23] And they say, Give up the man who struck your brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed. And so they would destroy the heir also.

Thus they would quench my coal that is left and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth. Then the king said to the woman, Go to your house and I will give orders concerning you.

And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, On me be the guilt, my lord, the king. And on my father's house, let the king and his throne be guiltless.

The king said, If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me and he shall never touch you again.

Then she said, Please let the king invoke the Lord your God with the avenger of blood kill no more. And my son be not destroyed. And he said, As the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.

[2 : 31] Then the woman said, Please let your servant speak a word to my lord, the king. And he said, Speak. And the woman said, Why have you planned such a thing against the people of God?

For in giving this decision, the king convicts himself. Inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again.

We must all die. We are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God will not take away life. And he devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast.

Now I have come to say this to my lord, the king. Because the people have made me afraid. And your servant thought, I will speak to the king.

It may be that the king will perform the request of his servants. For the king will hear and deliver his servant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the heritage of God.

[3 : 40] And your servant thought, The word of my lord, the king, will set me at rest. For my lord, the king, is like the angel of God to discern good and evil.

The lord your God be with you. Then the king answered the woman, Do not hide from me anything I ask you. And the woman said, Let my lord, the king, speak.

The king said, Is the hand of Joab with you in all this? The woman answered and said, As surely as you live, my lord, the king, one cannot turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord, the king, has said.

It was your servant, Joab, who commanded me. It was he who put all these words in the mouth of your servant. In order to charge the course of things, your servant Joab did this.

But my lord has wisdom, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all things that are on the earth. Then the king said to Joab, Behold, now I grant this.

[4 : 57] Go, bring back the young man, Absalom. And Joab fell on his face to the ground and paid homage and blessed the king. And Joab said, Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord, the king, in that the king has granted the request of his servant.

So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him dwell apart in his own house. He is not to come into my presence.

So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence. Now in all Israel, there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom.

From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him. And when he cut the hair of his head, for at the end of every year, he used to cut it. When it was heavy on him, he cut it.

He weighed the hair of his head 200 shekels by the king's weight. There were born to Absalom three sons and one daughter whose name was Tamar.

[5 : 57] She was a beautiful woman. So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem without coming into the king's presence. Then Absalom sent for Joab to send him to the king, but Joab would not come to him.

And he sent a second time, but Joab would not come. Then he said to his servants, See, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire.

So Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose and went to Absalom at his house and said to him, Why have your servants set my field on fire?

Absalom answered, Joab, Behold, I sent word to you. Come here that I may send you to the king to ask, Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still.

Now, therefore, let me go into the presence of the king. And if there is guilt in me, let him put me to death. Then Joab went to the king and told him and he summoned Absalom.

[6 : 56] So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king and the king kissed Absalom. After this, Absalom got himself a chariot and horses and 50 men to run before him.

And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate. And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, From what city are you?

And when he said, Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel, Absalom would say to him, See, your claims are good and right. But there is no man designated by the king to hear you. Then Absalom would say, Oh, that I were judge in the land.

Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me and I would give him justice. And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. And at the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the Lord in Hebron.

[8 : 06] For your servant vowed a vow while I lived at Geshur and Aram, saying, If the Lord will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the Lord. The king said to him, Go in peace.

So he arose and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, Absalom is king at Hebron. With Absalom went 200 men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their innocence and knew nothing. And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he went to Ephithophel, the Gilanite, David's counselor, from the city Gilo.

And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing. And a message came to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom.

Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee, for else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down ruin on us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword.

[9 : 14] And the king's servants said to the king, Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king decides. So the king went out, and all his household after him.

And the king left ten concubines to keep the house. And the king went out, and all the people after him. And they halted at the last house. And all his servants passed by him.

And all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all six hundred Gittites who had followed him from Gath, passed on before the king. Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, Why do you also go with us?

Go back and stay with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile from your home. You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wonder about with us? Since I go, I know not where.

Go back and take your brothers with you, and may the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you. But Ittai answered the king, As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be.

[10:23] And David said to Ittai, Go then, pass on. So Ittai the Gittite passed on with all his men, and all the little ones who were with him. And all the land wept aloud, as all the people passed by, and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and the people passed on toward the wilderness.

And Abiathar came up, and behold, Zadok came also with him, with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, until the people had all passed out of the city.

Then the king said to Zadok, Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back, and let me see both it and his dwelling place.

But if he says, I have no pleasure in you, behold, here I am. Let him do to me what seems good to him. The king also said to Zadok the priest, Are you not a seer?

Go back to the city in peace with your two sons, Emmaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.

[11:27] So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem, and they remained there. But David went up the ascent to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot with his head covered.

And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went. And it was told David, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

While David was coming to the summit, where God was worshipped, behold, Hushai the archite came to meet him with his coat torn and dirt on his head.

David said to him, If you go on with me, you will be a burden to me. But if you remain to the city, return to the city, and say to Absalom, I will be your servant, O king, as I have seen your father's servant in time past, so now I will be your servant.

Then you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel. Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So whatever you hear from the king's house, tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

[12:33] Behold, there the two sons are with them there, Ahimeaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son. And by them you shall send to me everything you hear. So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

This is God's word. Thanks be to God. Praise the Lord. We beat 11 o'clock on that. That's quite heavy lifting, isn't it?

The heaviest part is yet to come. And it's great to be gathered here, and how wonderful it is to open God's word for such an extended amount of time.

In some countries it would be unheard of to be doing that at a time like this. And we have such an honor and a privilege to take large portions of Scripture, sometimes one verse of Scripture, and sometimes chapters.

And we just hear the word of God fill this room. It's such a delight. And don't take that for granted this morning. Amen. There's some problems that just don't go away because we ignore them.

[13:41] You might think of your check engine light on your car. Many of us probably see that check engine light, and it becomes sort of a decorative feature on our dashboard.

Or we see it pop up, and we just crank the tunes and just ignore it, right? Check engine light. Or maybe a small water leak in your kitchen sink that, you know, you'll get to it eventually, right?

And then, sure enough, the cabinets are starting to warp from the water drips, and then all of a sudden the mold comes. Or maybe it's a more serious issue in your marriage.

Issues that are never addressed. Just assuming the problems are going to go away and fix themselves, but the problems are just buried until silence becomes the new norm within your

marriage.

And what I want you to see in all of that is that the most dangerous problems are often not the ones that we see, but the problems that we tolerate.

[14:47] That we allow to continue without addressing them. There are problems that do not go away because we ignore them. The check engine light's just going to get worse.

It's giving you a warning to do something. The leaking sink, whatever you want to call it, is never just going to go away.

It's never just going to solve itself. And your marriage, it's only going to get worse. These issues spread. They get worse, don't they?

That is exactly what is happening in David's house in the passage today. David's house has already begun to fracture back in last week's passage in chapter 13.

Through Amnon's egregious sin against his half-sister Tamar. And that led to Tamar's full brother avenging her and taking out Amnon's life.

[15:54] We reach chapter 14 today. It's not much better. It's like everyone's trying to manage the fallout. Which leads to chapter 15 where this hidden passivity that's been carrying over is now all of a sudden public rebellion.

It goes from hidden passivity to public rebellion. However, beneath the surface today in our passage is the steadfast echo of God's covenant, steadfast faithfulness to David's royal line from all the way back in chapter 7.

May we be reminded, as the Lord said to David, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men.

But my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before you. What I'm trying to prove to you through the structure of these chapters and the story that's unfolding is that these are not random acts of chaos.

They are all interconnected with one another. It's not political bad luck. This is covenant discipline. Unfolding in the chapters today is covenant discipline.

[17:33] Just as Hebrews 12, 7 weighs in on what discipline is, for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives.

In other words, unfolding in this passage is not God destroying David and giving it to him. God is indeed disciplining David through these chapters.

For that, I have a sermon title called Covenant Discipline. And I'm going to break this up into three different sections, but three different reminders that I think will help our time to kind of like take all of this passage, consolidate it into simple reminders.

But one single main point, and that is this, that God strips away our false securities to restore our trust in him.

That's the message between chapter 14, verse 1 to chapter 15, verse 37. Let's pray as we dive into this and see this quiet drift become public collapse.

[18:56] And through that collapse, God brings his servant back to humble trust in him. Let's pray. Lord, we come to you humbled by the weight and the authority of your word.

We come to you knowing that we often approach your word as if it's something to be just taken for granted, or making your word say something that it doesn't actually say.

Help us at this time to see the narrative, to see the hearts of the people, to then look at our hearts, to see how we need to be encouraged, how we need to be corrected or reprov'd in our own lives. And let it cut today, however it may, as a double-edged sword. And let your word have its way by the power of your spirit working actively in all of our hearts and our minds today.

And we praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. The first reminder of the three that I have for you today, we see in chapter 14, from the beginning to the end of chapter 14, and that's that God lets our spiritual drift expose the weakness of self-reliance.

[20:21] It's kind of like he lets us figure it out on our own. If we're in spiritual drift, he's going to allow that to expose the weakness and the fleeting nature of self-reliance.

And the burden of chapter 14 is the sure fact that there's a lot of movement. You've got a woman coming to David that was sent by Joab to basically make up this story and try to convince him of just this self-deprecating conclusion that what she's saying is a problem in the story is actually the problem in David's life.

And so there's a lot of movement in this passage, but there's no resolution in this chapter. No resolution. That is the burden of chapter 14.

There's movement, but no resolution. Let's take a look at this. A little pieces at a time here. Verse 1, Joab sees a problem.

I mean, this would be very logical. After all, one of the closest relationships to any king in these days was their commander, right? But what's the problem that Joab sees?

[21 : 40] Well, Amnon's dead, and Absalom is estranged. Between those two individual pieces of history, the kingdom is very unstable.

Joel, Joab is seeing this problem very clear. However, in verse 2 and the following four verses after that, maybe three verses, Joab decides not to address it directly with David and say, Hey, buddy, we've got to talk.

We've got some issues. He decides to devise a plan built on manipulation. It's kind of like his own little game of Parent Trap, if you know that movie.

He tries to get them to reconcile all through manipulation and playing games. So Joab brings a woman from Tekoa and scripts her a story.

And that story is simply this, that she is a widow in this made-up story of two sons. She's a widow of two sons, one of whom killed the other.

[22 : 46] And the family wants to execute the remaining son to avenge the other son's death. And so the burden is placed on this widow in the story, which is her.

And he's saying, help my son survive. Can't we do something? And so it's about a parent about to lose a son. It's about that son who's about to get murdered by the family.

And so in verse 8, David listens and is drawn in emotionally here. He renders a verdict. He even swears protection. He says in verse 11, Not one hair of your son shall fall.

David fell for the trap. Again. Previously, it was from the lips of Nathan in chapter 12. Right? In that parable, that story of the rich and the poor man.

He did it again. David falls for these stories. It's a sure trap. And Joab knew it. One was through the lips of truth, but now it's through the lips of deceit.

[23 : 59] The woman turns the script completely back on David in verse 13. She says to him, Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God?

I mean, cunning as she is. The serpent in the garden was cunning too, mind you. Cunning as she is. She even wraps this in theology. Claiming that God devises means to bring home the banished. Though David will not. You're not acting like a godly king, David, in verse 14. David obviously folds. And he brings Absalom back into Jerusalem in verse 21.

And at first glance, leading all the way up to verse 23, it seems like progress is being made, doesn't it? As his exile ends and Joab's plan seems to have worked.

And voila, they're back in Jerusalem in restoration, right? Praise the Lord. Well, not so fast. Tension immediately returns to the passage.

[25 : 07] Because as Absalom is returned to Jerusalem, he's not allowed to see the king in verse 24. And in verse 28, two years pass like this.

Absalom being in proximity of the king, and the king not initiating anything with Absalom. Not reconciled.

Not judged. Not resolved. A check engine light on. And ignored. David appears compassionate. But he is not acting in obedience. This is true for us. We can look merciful while actually avoiding obedience.

And I'm going to put a term on that. I'm going to put a term on what it means to be compassionate, but not act in obedience. That's called spiritual drift.

[26 : 15] It's drifting spiritually. It's not actually doing as the Lord commands. Feeling something, but doing nothing about it. There is no justice.

There's no repentance. No truth brought into light. And when Absalom finally forces attention by burning Joab's field, if you want to know anything about Absalom, there you have it.

This guy's pretty crazy. He'll burn somebody's field if he's not getting his way. He does that in verse 30. But it actually works.

He gets the attention of Joab, and David says, okay, what's going on? And the long-awaited reunion takes place in verse 30.

Absalom bows before the king. David kisses him. But has David's damage been done over the course of these two years of just sitting by with his son, being exiled within his own kingdom? [27 : 19] Certainly that's caused some damage. His spiritual drift has caused some damage. Might this whole kissing and bowing be just external?

As we read this morning already, the chaos that unfolds in chapter 15 clearly shows David's spiritual drift has actually caused significant damage.

The injustice done to Tamar was never made right. David still hasn't addressed that.

And when justice is buried, it doesn't just stay buried. It gets taken up by the hands of man. And David certainly has become not the man after God's own heart.

David has become a man after his own passivity, after his own comfort, after his own sort of just ignorance to the check engine light.

[28 : 23] When we compare this to Christ's parable of the prodigal son, we see a stark contrast in Luke 15, 11 through 32.

We see a crucial missing element in David that causes national division, that causes chapter 15 to occur. Like in Luke, for instance, the father in the parable runs to meet the son, but only after the son's repentance.

In 2 Samuel here, David allows Absalom to return without repentance. He's a murderer that's allowed to just hang out in Jerusalem again. In Luke, the father fully restores the son with reconciliation and celebration.

It's a great scene. But in 2 Samuel, David keeps Absalom at a distance, offering partial fractured restoration. And maybe lastly in Luke, the result is restored relationship, unity, true unity.

And in 2 Samuel, the result is open rebellion, national division. The result is chapter 15. You see, where the prodigal's father restores a repentant son, David restores an unrepentant one.

[29 : 45] And the kingdom has to pay for that. Spiritual drift is dangerous. Because spiritual drift rarely looks dangerous at first until you see the cabinets warping.

Until you see the engine starting to smoke in the car. Until you see the marital intimacy all of a sudden fading. It's like putting a bandage over a wound that is infected underneath.

Church, how often do we do the same thing? How often do we do the same thing? We settle for the appearance of peace.

I'm talking to myself, okay? Not being hard on you. How many times I just, oh, everyone, they're back in the church together.

Everything's good. All right, my job is done. Well, is it? Right? We settle for the appearance of peace. We substitute delay for repentance.

[30 : 57] Like, well, you know, we'll just let things go a little bit. And, you know, repentance might appear. But this is close to repentance, right? But is it repentance?

We call access, proximity, reconciliation. But is it truly reconciliation? Church, this makes me actually think of the passivity of men specifically.

Like husbands who habitually suppress problems rather than addressing them. Husbands. fathers who fear rejection of their kids over holding them accountable and responsible for their actions.

It makes me think of the passivity of all humanity. How much easier, how much it's easier to just let things go and just forget about them and just label it, oh, that's just Betty or Sue, right?

That's just how they are and just let it go to keep peace. That's not peace. It makes me think of the passivity of all humanity as we talked about last week of how we often don't lean into hard conversations because we like to feel comfortable.

[32 : 24] Church, what we learn here in chapter 14 is that we can put somebody back in the room, whether it's a physical room or back in the room of our lives, without ever making things right.

Superficiality. And doing so causes something deeper to grow and that's what we see in chapter 15. What David tolerated privately, Absalom, is about to blow it up publicly.

And we see that. I hope you see this reminder that God lets our spiritual drift expose the weakness of self-reliance. This next reminder that we have in this passage is that God removes the illusions we were trusting instead of Him.

God removes the illusions we were trusting instead of Him. And needless to say, Absalom, crazy, field-burning Absalom, he rises.

He's quite impressive. It's crucial to know and notice how He does all of this. How He rises.

[33 : 32] Because it's all built on image. It's all built on the fancy commercials on the TV that they're watching back then. It's all about the promises that are made.

After all, chapter 14, the narrator of 2 Samuel already said that he's a charming fellow. In verse 25 and 26, he's the Gaston, the heartthrob of the passage.

He's building this image. In verse 1, in sure act of undermining David, of basically mishandling everything, these two years have passed, David's not doing a lick of justice to Tamar.

He's not doing anything for even Amnon. I'm sure Absalom said, discipline me, Dad. You haven't said anything to me. Right? In a sure act of undermining David's handling of basically everything, he builds quite an image.

He has chariots. He has horses. He has 50 men running before him. And it's all theater. It's all looks. It's all symbolism.

[34 : 43] And further, Absalom takes it a step further. He actually acts like the king. He's like that political rival sitting there, just taking dissatisfied people of the nation and saying, oh, well, if I were to judge, you know, in verse 2, if I were king, right?

He says, in verse 3 and 4, there is no man designated by the king to hear you. Oh, that I were to judge in the land. Absalom's undermining and rising to this superficial theatrical power.

He offers not justice, but he offers affirmation. I mean, that's what false teachers campaigns are built on, aren't they? Not justice, not truth, but affirmations.

He builds influence, right? But it's all on dissatisfaction. Taking unhappy people in the country, looking at the gas prices and pointing at them, hey, you know, don't trust that guy.

The gas is too high. It's all built on dissatisfaction. It's superficial. In verse 6, the narrator says, his ploy, his theatrics, it worked.

[35 : 59] Verse 6, it says, so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. What has David done?

Illusions feel stable until God removes them. And that's exactly what God is doing through Absalom. David thought the kingdom was secure, that the people were unconditionally loyal to him because he's the king. He had walls, he had power, he had everything.

And, sadly enough, he thought the past was settled. But this was all fragile because it was an illusion. After four years, Absalom's campaign continued.

So, put these together, two years, I'm going to do some years in this sermon too, just so you know. Two years, Absalom was living in Jerusalem, kind of just excommunicated, shunned from David.

[37 : 07] And then, all of a sudden, he lifts the shun and then allows Absalom to come and sort of reconcile. And then Absalom rebels, undermines him.

For four years, he builds a campaign. Cloaking his rebellion in religion, it kind of reaches a peak in verse 7.

Absalom asked to fulfill a vow in Hebron. Oh, that's a great thing for his son to do, right? Wonderful. His business in Hebron was similar to that of Joab, though.

He was on a plan to manipulate the people to proclaim, Absalom is king in verse 10. And we might ask, why?

What in the world? Can't we get lost? Like, in that reading, you can be honest, weren't you kind of lost? It was just a lot going on. Well, here's the truth of what's happening.

[38 : 09] God does not just forgive David's sin. He dismantles his false security. And He's doing that through Absalom. Everything David had leaned on previously, whether his position, perception, perception, or stability, or influence.

God is beginning to strip it away through Absalom. It's not just random chaos.

It's very direct. In verse 13 and the following four verses, David receives a report. The hearts of men of Israel have gone after Absalom.

A great nightmare has come true. One sentence and everything he thought was stable collapses, church.

This is a critical moment in David's kingship. What does David do? He doesn't stand on the promises of God.

[39 : 29] He runs. He runs. He runs. Church, hear this clearly this morning.

What you trust in instead of God will not survive on the day of testing. What you trust in instead of God will not survive on the day of testing.

That could be financial. You trust in money more than God. It's not going to survive the day that God tests your money. It could be relationships.

It could be all sorts of things and I believe that even there are people here today where God is testing them. I hope that testing makes sense to you.

Some of the things that you feel safest in right now may actually be the things that God is going to shake this morning. It is idolatry at worst and maybe just dangerous self-deception at best like you just didn't know how bad things were getting.

[40 : 49] Church, we don't know what we worship until God takes it away. We don't know what we worship until God strips it completely out of our lives.

How true is this? Even for those who don't trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior and actually act like they've trusted Jesus as their Lord and Savior actually have their lives show it.

Those of us who claim to be saved but celebrate or affirm what God clearly condemns according to His Word. Areas where sin has become sort of a therapy in our lives to make us happy.

That could be even something as overeating church. Gluttony. What happens when that sin is taken away? When the food is taken away?

When the money is taken away? It reveals where your heart is truly at. True conversion is not being said that sin is taken away, friends.

[41 : 57] It's the opposite. And if you are here today not surrendering your all to Jesus Christ, what are you waiting for? Because if everything you trust in is stripped away, what are you left with?

Only God. Isn't that glorious though? It should be. A God who is holy, just, and that we are sinners under His judgment, but Jesus Christ lived the life that we cannot live and died the death that we deserve, but rose again that sinners like you and me are forgiven and made right with God by the blood of Christ.

Turn your life to Him. Repent, turn away from your sin, and trust in Him alone as your Lord and Savior today, and you will be saved according to God's word.

Not my opinion, not anyone's opinion, but God's sure, steady anchor word. The only safety in this life is by our faith in Jesus, and that is certain to survive in the day of testing, whether in this life or the afterlife to come.

It will survive the day of testing. The third reminder that we have is sort of towards the end of chapter 15. God teaches us to say again, let him do what seems good to him.

[43 : 35] God teaches us to say again, let him do what seems good to him. In verse 18, this is where everything changes.

Not around David, not about all this chaos that we've read about going on around David, but the change occurs within David, within him.

And we have to really picture this scene as David's entire dynasty is collapsing. He is fleeing, he's running from opposition, and there are people and noise, screams, crying, and just voices, chaos, dust, everything going past David, and he is seeing his entire dynasty fall before his eyes and around him.

Do you see it? And at this moment, David reaches a theological turning point.

moment. It's so interesting how God can speak so clearly in some of the noisiest seasons of life and really wake us up and get our attention.

[45 : 02] David gets his attention from God. It's I the Gittite. David urges him to return as not to suffer exile again.

Even in this moment of his whole dynasty collapsing, he's beginning to know what it means to be king, to really care about the welfare of people.

He couldn't do it on the mountain Jerusalem, but he can do it in the valley entering the wilderness. When everything is stripped away, he can all of a sudden reclaim the heart of God here.

He says to this Ittai, Ittai, the Gittite, the Gittite, tongue-tied in that, he says to this guy who was already in exile, who was having provisions in Jerusalem, who was covered, who was cared for, he says, go back.

Don't come with me. Don't come with me. Go back, he says, and take your brothers with you, and may the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you.

[46 : 16] But after refusing that offer, they all continued. This guy who was in exile was so loyal to the king, he followed the king even when the king was receiving the response and getting what was coming to him.

And I want you to picture this scene as the exile joins him in this area. All the land, they wept aloud as all the people passed by and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people passed

toward the wilderness.

This is about two to five miles of fleeing. In addition to the theological turning points as everything's crumbling, he has another turning point here.

This is where the turning point is sure. If there was any doubt before with Ittai, it's sure here. It continues as the faithful and the surviving son of Ahimelech arrives in the wilderness.

Do you remember who Ahimelech was? He was the high priest who was massacred at Nob in 1 Samuel chapter 22. His surviving son, Abiathar.

[47 : 39] Abiathar Ahimelech comes on the road of compromise, on the road that David had paved with the ark of God.

And him and the priests were with him. It's at this moment the ultimate test has come.

David says to Abiathar, carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back.

You hear the turning point? And let me see both it and his dwelling place. But if he says, I have no pleasure in you, if God says that I have no pleasure in you because of your spiritual drift over all these years, he says, behold, here I am.

Let him do to me what seems good to him. This is the moment where David in the collapse of his dynasty, he stops managing, he stops grasping, and he submits.

[49 : 01] He submits back to God. He refuses to use God as sort of his lucky rabbit's foot, as many people treated the ark, as a tool for security.

Instead, he entrusts himself to wholly the will of God. This is unconditional submission. It reminds me of the tune that we sing very loudly in the church.

It is well with my soul. David is singing that song right here. And at face value, some of us, I even thought it, it might look at as if David is rejecting the ark, right?

Like, send it away. I don't want that ark. And its proximity. He's rejecting any chance of victory. But maybe David, finally, after 15 years had passed since the incident on the roof, maybe for the first time, he is not rejecting God, but he's trusting God as he once did.

The weight of this breakthrough moment continues as David ascends to the Mount of Olives, weeping, barefoot, head covered in verse 30. Everything that he has built is unraveling.

[50 : 30] And for the first time in some time, David reveals prayerful dependence. Once again, in verse 31, look with me. When he hears that Ahithophel has joined Absalom, David cries out, Oh Lord, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

You see, his dependence is now directed upward, not outward. In chapter 14, wasn't David managing everything, managing him poorly?

In chapter 15, don't we see David submitting, unconditionally? David's dependence is no longer outward, but it's upwards.

And while yes, he still acts wisely, we see some movement that follows this. He sends Hushai as a spy to convene with the priest that he sent back to Jerusalem.

In other words, yeah, he's still the king. It would be wise to do something, right? So the king's still making plans. But now those plans are coupled with humility and trust.

[51 : 52] It's a new David here, reoriented David. And stepping back, I think we can all see clearly that the kingdom collapses publicly because sin was tolerated privately.

The check engine light was on for quite some time. And David didn't take it to AutoZone. didn't get that code scanned.

The problem has been unresolved for so long. David is no longer controlling the outcome.

Church, isn't this what it means to trust in God? To not control the outcome any longer? David finally begins to respond rightly.

Church, I want you to hear this. Do not wait for everything to be stripped away from you to realize God is the only one worthy of your trust.

[53 : 05] Don't wait for your kingdom to collapse. trust in God right now. Rededicate your trust to God on this day.

Look at the timeline. We have to realize that all of this occurring in this passage, all the chaos, all the noise, all the crying, it's occurring over a decade, over a decade after David's moral failure with Bathsheba.

We're pretty far away from the roof, aren't we church? And yet, under God's providence, David is brought back to a familiar place.

He's back in exile, back on the run, back in the wilderness, a place where he once learned dependence as he ran from the former King Saul, a place where he once trusted God deeply. God had to get him there. Who are we to think that God will never strip away our securities to teach us to trust him again?

[54 : 33] He's certainly done it in many of our lives. I know it. What a shadow we have in David. As he was stripped because of his own sin, we know a Savior who was stripped because of our sin.

Our passivity, our spiritual drift, our failures, our idolatry, the perfect man was stripped because of our sin.

There is a greater king indeed that is forecasted throughout the narrative of the Bible. We know his name. His name is Jesus. Jesus never drifted, never compromised, never relied on appearance, and yet Jesus was stripped for our sin.

He was rejected. He was led outside the city, publicly humiliated, and viciously crucified. Not for his failures, but for ours.

How can we drift from a grace like that? How can we doubt a grace like that?

[55 : 55] How can we reject a grace like that? God. Church, if God is stripping something from your life right now, it may not be his judgment against you, but it may be his mercy towards you.

It may be his love towards you. It may be his covenant promise for you. May we remember the loving covenant discipline of God.

God. Remember these words from chapter 7, 2 Samuel. One who promised to David's offspring, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the son of man, but my steadfast love will not depart from him.

It is because God loves his people enough to remove what we trust instead of him, so that we may learn again to trust him alone.

[57 : 04] So ask yourself, what might God be stripping from your life right now? I know for certain it's so that you can learn to trust him again.

Let's pray.