

April 26, 2026 - 2 Samuel 16:1-17:29 - "Evil Can't Revise, what God has Already Said"

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me to 2 Samuel chapter 16. When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him with a couple of donkeys saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

And the king said to Ziba, Why have you brought these? Ziba answered, The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink.

And the king said, And where is your master's son? Ziba said to the king, Behold, he remains in Jerusalem, for he said, Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father.

Then the king said to Ziba, Behold, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours. And Ziba said, I pay homage. Let me ever find favor in your sight, my lord the king.

When king David came to Bahurum, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gerah.

[1 : 22] And as he came, he cursed continually. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of king David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

And Shimei said as he cursed, Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man. The Lord has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned.

And the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood. Then Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, said to the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?

Let me go over and take off his head. But the king said, What have I to do with you, the sons of Zeruiah, if he is cursing, because the Lord has said to him, Cursed David?

Who then shall say, Why have you done so? And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, Behold, my own son seeks my life.

[2 : 29] How much more now may this Benjaminite leave him alone and let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today.

So David and his men went on the road, while Shammai went along the hillside opposite him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and flung dust.

And the king and all the people who were with him arrived weary at the Jordan, and there he refreshed himself. Now Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with them.

And when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, Long live the king, long live the king. And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this your loyalty to your friend?

Why did you not go with your friend? And Hushai said to Absalom, No, for whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain.

[3 : 42] And again, whom should I serve? Should it not be his son? As I have served your father, so I will serve you. Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, Give your counsel.

What shall we do? And Ahithophel said to Absalom, Go into your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father. And the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened. So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went into his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

Now in those days, the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the word of God. So was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.

Moreover, Ahithophel said to Absalom, Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight.

[4 : 49] I will come upon him while he is weary and discouraged, and throw him into a panic, and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down only the king, and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes home to her husband.

You seek the life of only one man, and all the people will be at peace. And the advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

Then Absalom said, Call Hushai the archite also, and let us hear what he has to say. And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom said to him, Thus has Ahithophel spoken.

Shall we do as he says? If not, you speak. Then Hushai said to Absalom, This time the counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good.

Hushai said, You know that your father and his men are mighty men, and that they are enraged like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Besides, your father is expert in war.

[5 : 51] He will not spend the night with the people. Behold, even now he has hidden himself in one of the pits, or in some other place. And as soon as some of the people fall at the first attack, whoever hears it will say, There has been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.

Then even the valiant men, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will utterly melt with fear. For all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and that those who are with him are valiant men. But my counsel is that all Israel be gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, as the sand by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person.

So we shall come upon him in some place where he is to be found, and we shall light upon him as the dew falls on the ground. And of him and all the men with him, not one will be left.

If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley, until not even a pebble is to be found there.

[6 : 55] And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, Thus and so did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so have I counseled.

Now, therefore, send quickly, and tell David, Do not stay tonight at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means pass over, lest the king and all the people who are with him be swallowed up.

Now Jonathan and Ahimeaz were waiting at En-Rogel. A female servant was to go and tell them, and they were to go and tell King David, for they were not to be seen entering the city.

But a young man saw them and told Absalom, So both of them went away quickly and came to the house of a man at Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard.

And they went down into it, and the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth and scattered grain on it, and nothing was known of it. When Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, Where is Ahimeaz and Jonathan?

[8 : 18] And the woman said to them, They have gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem. After they had gone, the men came up out of the well and went and told King David.

They said to David, Arise and go quickly over the water, for thus and so has Ahithophel counseled against you. Then David arose, and all the people who were with him, and they crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, not one was left who had not crossed the Jordan. When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and went off home to his own city.

He set his house in order and hanged himself, and he died and was buried in the tomb of his father.

Then David came to Mahanaim, and Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel.

Now Absalom had set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruah, Joab's mother.

[9 : 30] And Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead. When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi, the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir, the son of Amiel from Lodabar, and Bartzillai, the Gileadite from Rogalim, brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, and lentils, honey, and curds, and sheep, and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat.

For they said, the people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness. This is God's word. Thanks be to God. We beat 11 o'clock again.

Amen. Again, the two chapters reading through that is sometimes daunting in and of itself, but the daunting task is yet to come here.

And it's, what do we do with all of this going on? We started a narrative. The story began in chapter 14 with the fall of David's kingdom.

And so, with the fall of David's kingdom came the rise of Absalom. And so, we really looked at the fall last week, and now we're seeing the rise of Absalom coming after David and intending to conquer.

[11 : 13] If you see where the story's going, there's some spoiler alerts. You'll see probably at the heading of chapter 18, the beans are spilled there. The tea spilled, whatever you call it these days.

Absalom is killed. And so, that's where the story is going. And so, what we have is a very long story going on, but a message that I hope to clarify in this specific second half of the tension that's rising. I want to start out thinking of moments in life where everything that we thought in our lives was stable, that we thought was stable, starts to feel a little bit uncertain.

Like when we look at the landscape of our life and we're like, things are pretty good, right? And then all of a sudden, something feels uncertain.

Something happens, inevitably. We all know that. Something occurs, some drama in family occurs, and all of a sudden, everything is uprooted.

[12 : 25] And it's not because God has changed, right? God is unchanging. He's immutable. But it's because everything around you seems loud enough to make you question if His Word was true.

We see this in different areas of life. Like someone who says something to you that just simply is not true. But for some reason, it sticks.

It wakes you up at night. It lives rent-free in your head, what people say about you. Or maybe it's an action that occurs that you would have never expected, a deed against you that you would have never expected.

And now you're asking, where is God in all of this? What was once stable is now uncertain. Or maybe it's a plan that begins to unfold before you that seems way bigger than you are, more strategic than you are, nearly unstoppable.

Like how is this going to be a good turnout of events? When things go from stable to uncertain.

[13 : 41] In those moments, whether it's through words, whether it's through individual actions, or if it's through plans that are unfolding, it's these times where it's not theoretical anymore.

It becomes very deeply personal. It makes us say, can I still trust God and what He has said when everything in my life seems to contradict what He has said?

The uncertainty weighs in. I believe that's exactly where David is right now. In the wilderness. Looking back, seeing the fall of his kingdom. Being surrounded in exiled people. In the wilderness. And this is what I believe David is walking through in chapters 16 and 17.

David is surrounded all throughout this narrative that we read today with deceptive voices, public humiliation, actions from individuals, betrayal, seemingly betrayal from within, and a strategic plan designed to destroy David.

[15 : 05] Just David. No one else. Because Absalom needs David's men. And looming over this passage today is a question.

Will evil overturn God's word? Will evil win? And the answer to that question is put in my sermon titled, Evil Can't Revise What God Already Said.

No amount of evil in life can revise what God has already said.

The main point today is don't let any other voice interpret your life. Trust God's word. And I'd like to break this up into chapter 16 into two sections, and then chapter 17 into one section.

And before we look into this and see the landscape around David that's developing, let's come together in prayer as we ask the Lord to help us through the power of his Holy Spirit to change us today, to refine us, to equip us to be a church that he loves so dearly and wants to use us so dearly in this world.

[16 : 33] Let's pray. Father, thank you for gathering us here today. Thank you for your word that is sharper than a two-edged sword.

And Father, we know that looking at all of these things and the chaos happening, we can get lost in all of these verses and these words.

But Father, we pray that you help to zero in our attention upon the meaning of this story, why you wrote this, and how it impacts us even today in 2026.

And we are begging you to help change us, to sharpen our thinking, to help us completely defrag the lies of the world, and to find truth in your word.

Help us to look at the world through the eyes of truth. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. The first section is going to be from verse 1 through 14.

[17 : 44] And we're going to see, When evil words shake our trust in God's word. When evil words shake our trust in God's word.

Immediately starting out in verse 1, like I was kind of highlighting the overall context of the story, the fall of David's kingdom. And now, verse 1, David is still fleeing Jerusalem.

And David flees out of Jerusalem, and now he's beyond the summit, and he meets Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth.

You remember that name, Mephibosheth. We've seen that name before. We've stumbled over that name before. Might still stumble today. Okay. Ahithophel is a little bit more of a tongue twister for my liking.

But Mephibosheth, we met him in chapter 9. This was the surviving son of Jonathan. And this is the man who was, all the kingdom was basically going to be inherited to him.

[18 : 54] In a worldly perspective, this would be the rival of David. And so there was that time of mercy in chapter 9, where David showed mercy to Mephibosheth. He came with nothing in his hands to bring, but just pleading for David not to kill him.

Mephibosheth. And so Ziba was made the servant of Mephibosheth back in chapter 9. And Ziba, he's doing pretty well.

Don't you see him in this passage? He brings donkeys. He brings bread. Raisins. It's a hot commodity in the Beck family. Fruit.

Wine. All these things. On the surface, it looks like loyal generosity to David. I brought all this stuff. You look tired, David. Here, have some wine. But David asks in verse 2, why have you brought these?

And more directly in verse 3, he says, where is your master's son? I know this don't belong to you, essentially. There's a little suspicion here with Ziba.

[20 : 03] I don't think David ever trusted him, even back when he told him to serve Mephibosheth. Ziba responds in a calculated and sort of convenient report stating that Mephibosheth, in verse 3, he remains in Jerusalem, hoping today the house of Israel will give him back the kingdom of his father.

Now, remembering the context, David had shown covenant kindness to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake.

And so, he restored Mephibosheth's land, gave him a seat at the king's table. And so, with this report that Mephibosheth is back in Jerusalem, hoping that he's going to be reigning king now that he's out.

This is a report not just of political information, of who's in charge and what's going on politically, but this is an accusation of betrayal to David.

David doesn't know if that's true or false. The man that he showed kindness to is now, all of a sudden, betraying him. Ziba is saying, the man you showed mercy to is now turning on you.

[21 : 25] But in a couple of weeks, we'll find out, too, what the real truth is. But for the sake of context and emphasis here, Ziba is lying straight through his teeth.

That's not exactly the whole story of why Mephibosheth is staying behind. And we'll find that out soon. This is deception. And interestingly enough, this deception works with David.

It works. Ziba appears loyal, useful, and while Mephibosheth seems like he's disloyal, he's ambitious on his own. And David makes a quick judgment.

He says, all that belongs, belonged to Mephibosheth, is now yours. The king is declared, it's decreed, it all belongs to Ziba.

Maybe that was Ziba's plan all along. In other words, David lets, right here, and I want you to see this, right here, he lets a word interpret the situation, and he judges wrongly.

[22 : 32] A word interprets the situation, and he judges wrongly. And so, let's pause there, for the sake of, I think this will benefit us, because David has already heard this one voice, and responded quickly and wrongly, as context soon ahead will show.

But listen for another voice. Another voice enters the scene. One that's louder. One that's not so subtly deceptive, but very harsh, and very much so public.

And this time, David responds very differently. Look with me, as the passage continues, up through verse 5-6, as David reaches Bar-Urum, Shammai comes out cursing continually.

In verse 6, he throws stones, he's flinging dust, he's crying, he looks like a lunatic. He's yelling to David, get out!

You man of blood! In verse 7, the Lord has avenged you! In verse 8. Now, his accusations are twisted. He does look like a lunatic.

[23 : 47] He's lost it. He forgot to take his medication that morning. His accusations are very twisted, but it's interesting. They still sting David.

Even though they're false, they still sting David, because David is really under the discipline of God. And that's very interesting.

That should be very interesting to us. I love the... It's like we have an Old Testament Peter here. We have Abishai, Joab's brother, David's nephew.

We met him back in chapter 10. Remember with Esail, his brother, who was chasing after the enemy, and then got stabbed with the spear.

Peter, I call him Esail the gazelle. And so this Abishai comes up like Peter does in Christ's day. He says what everyone was thinking.

[24 : 46] He says, let me go over there and take off his head. That definitely escalated quickly. Praise the Lord.

David refused. But David allows him to continue. And this is very interesting. In verse 11, he says, let him curse, for the Lord has told him to.

David's not stamping approval on what Abishai is saying. Abishai is not righteous, right? But he is saying that even sinful, a sinful voice is not outside God's sovereign hand.

And then he says in verse 12, it may be that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing. Maybe this time of hostility will turn out for good.

So David keeps walking with this lunatic cursing. And they arrive very weary. And so look at these two voices.

[26 : 00] With Ziba, David let a voice shape his judgment. With Shammai, David lets God's word shape his interpretation.

This is interesting. The difference is not necessarily the words that David hears. It is which word he trusts to interpret what is happening.

And it has nothing to do with the voices that he's hearing, but the voice that he heard from Nathan long ago. The promise of God.

And church, this is not just about words being spoken. It's about which voice you allow to interpret your life.

You will hear voices like Ziba. Those subtly deceptive voices. The persuasive voices. The helpful on the surface voices.

[26 : 59] But shaping how you see reality in the wrong direction. And you interpret reality based on those voices. Or you hear the voices like Shammai.

They're loud. They're harsh. They're accusing. They're trying to define who you are and what your situation means. Like when you walk through a hardship, somebody might say, well, what have you done?

Why is all this happening to you? Obviously, you're under the judgment of God, right? You've probably heard those voices. It's popular in Pentecostal circles and health and wealth circles.

But the real danger is not that those voices exist. Those voices are going to exist. All these things are going to exist in our lives. But is it that you keep letting them define reality for you?

That you listen. You buy into the lies. And then it changes your perspective completely. And so we should see that when words confuse, when words slander, when words accuse you, we can't let them become the final interpreter.

[28 : 17] Because that belongs to God's word alone. Because if we're honest, we don't just hear those voices. We start to live by them that surround us.

We replay them, especially at night when you're trying to fall asleep. They just keep you up. You start making decisions based on those voices. And before long, what someone has said about you carries more weight than what God has said over you.

This happens all the time with, I believe, with folks who struggle and are dealing with infertility issues today. Or at some point in their life, they are asked constantly by basically shallow people, why don't you have any kids?

You're in your prime, right? And it's a haunting question that starts distorting your reality. Like, is God's word really true?

He does love me, right? Or somebody might accuse somebody of God's judgment because of infertility. Maybe it's health issues or weight issues in your life.

[29 : 36] Comments bring about, these insecurities. Or maybe it's your career goals. I can tell you one thing. If I would have listened to the voices that were impressing upon my own life throughout my teenage years, my early 20s, I wouldn't be standing here in a pulpit if I would have listened to those voices.

The question is not merely what are they saying about me? The better question is what voice is actually shaping how we think, how we feel, and how we live right now.

Because whatever voice you trust in most, that becomes a functional authority in your life. This is what happened with David against, with Ziba's words.

This is what happens with Shammai, the words that he was throwing at David. If you let other voices interpret your life, you will eventually live in a world that God never said was true about you or your situation.

But God's word has already spoken and still stands louder than every voice against his king and his people, and even us today. The same remains true.

[30 : 50] Let's continue as we see not only actions against the, or not only these voices, these words against the king, but let's look at these evil actions that make us question God's word.

In verse 15 through 23, the scene shifts back to Jerusalem and contrasts, while David was weary in verse 14 like we just ended.

He's getting in the wilderness weary. We see an opposite of weary. We see strength in Jerusalem. Absalom and all the people in verse 15, the men of Israel, all the people came to Jerusalem and Ahithophel with them.

That final phrase is very important because Absalom's strength isn't just in numbers. But it's in the presence of this one counselor whose advice carried so much weight to Absalom.

We might remember last week in chapter 15 verse 31 where David specifically prayed that Absalom's counsel would fall with, or I'm sorry, Ahithophel's counsel would fall with, as he counsels Absalom.

[32 : 20] And in verse 16, Hushai enters the scene. We remember that this is a man who was sent back into Jerusalem to kind of like debrief with the priest that he sent back and be a listening ear and make sure that Ahithophel is kept in check.

So he was sent back and he's labeled by the narrator here, the author, as David's friend in verse 16. And so it says that because it shows us that Hushai's presence in Jerusalem isn't betrayal against David, but it's actually loyalty to David.

Yet he strangely agrees with Absalom with these words. He comes into the scene in verse 16 saying, Long live the king!

Long live the king! We might say, Well, wait a minute, Hushai. Whose side are you on? Right? But it's interesting the author corrects us in that thinking.

He says David's friend. Even Absalom refers to Hushai as David's friend. Now Absalom, he's not a dummy. He's far from a dummy.

[33 : 39] He looks at these words and he says, Is your loyalty to your friend, David? Why did you not go with your friend in verse 17? And so he took these words, Long live the king.

Absalom is not a dummy, but he is self-absorbed. It's all about image. He's, like I said last week, he's like Gaston. He's the guy with the muscles. He's tall in stature.

He's a hunk. And everyone would believe him even if he was, he was a dummy. But Hushai responds with very careful words.

He says, No, for whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be. I want you to think about that for a minute.

Because this could have, this is one of those things with double meaning. He says, No, for whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be.

[34 : 43] This is brilliantly ambiguous, isn't it? Absalom hears loyalty to this new regime while Hushai still remained committed to David.

He's the perfect mole. Hushai's the unspoken hero of the story here. But real horror enters the passage when we see the wisdom of Ahithophel.

As Absalom turns to him in verse 20, Give your counsel. What shall we do? And Ahithophel replies with shocking clarity, sad clarity.

He says, Go into your father's concubines in verse 21. Now this is not merely immorality, but this is a calculated act of defiance against the king.

And the reason why Ahithophel wants to do this is in verse 21. And all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father and that the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened.

[36 : 11] What Ahithophel is doing with these actions against the king, and we might say actions against God's word, he is staging irreversible rebellion against David.

You can't undo an act like that. It can't be undone. And sadly enough, verse 22, Absalom follows through.

So they pitched a tent for Absalom. This is a staged encounter. and they pitched it where? On a roof.

And Absalom went into his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. Verse 22. You've heard about a roof before, haven't we?

The location is so striking, and we ought to see that clearly. It happened on the roof, the very place where David's own secret sin began in chapter 11 is now the judgment unfolding that was spoken by the prophet Nathan in chapter 12, verse 11 through 12.

[37 : 27] Literally, words are coming to fulfillment through these evil actions, and they're coming to pass publicly, just as Nathan had spoken God's word to David.

Do you see it? David acted secretly, and God promised, I will do this thing before all Israel and before the Son in chapter 12.

And here that word is being fulfilled. God's word is true, even despite the evil actions of men. The chapter closes by reminding us of how powerful Ahithophel's counsel seemed.

It was in verse 23, it was as if one consulted the word of God. Ahithophel was very, very compelling, very believable, wise as a serpent.

And yet the bitter irony that we see here is that this wicked counsel actually accomplished the very purpose of the true word of God. That's challenging.

[38 : 44] Isn't God's sovereignty such a thing to be grasped, church? David is gone, God's is done, Absalom rises, irreversible damage is done, disgrace is done, Ahithophel, his words are as if he consulted with God.

God's sovereignty is such a thing to be grasped. Now, evil is not excused, right? That's not a way to say, well, evil is going to be evil, right?

God's sovereign, don't worry, be happy, hakuna matata, right? Evil is not excused.

Ahithophel, he's still wicked. Absalom is still guilty of irreversible damage to David, but neither of those vile, evil actions are outside the sovereign hand of God.

None of it. I don't know if you woke up this morning and thought the world had it all together. I mean, what just happened yesterday was just another attempt of evil and murder against the president.

[40 : 25] I mean, our day, every day, I'd recommend maybe taking a break from the news. Our world is filled with so much evil, the news can't be trusted to tell the truth anymore.

it's hard to know what to trust. And better yet, as Christians living in this chaos, the same chaos, there's nothing new today that hasn't already happened.

There's nothing new under the sun. Look at the church in Acts. Look at the reign of Nero in the early centuries of Christianity. There's nothing new under the sun.

Actually, comparatively, we have it pretty good as Christians right now. Can't say that about the future. But when evil actions make us question God's word, we must remember that God is still working even through what he hates.

So important for us to know. Because that's the story of the cross, isn't it? Wicked men condemned Christ? Wicked hands crucified Christ?

[41 : 44] And yet Acts 2 says that Jesus, the same Christ, was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

God never approved of their evil, but he did rule and he did guide history. And it led to our salvation. Praise the Lord. And he continues to rule the narrative as evil actions do not escape the sovereign plan of God.

This last section is a larger chunk, but fairly simple if you look at it. We see here when evil plans seem certain or sure, when evil plans seem certain to overcome God's word.

So it's plans that you're just like, well, this is the end. I might as well just check up on my life insurance and make sure my living will is in order and this is it.

There we go. So, this is the final section. This opens up with a plan that seems almost sure to succeed. Ahithophel rises again, says to Absalom, Now, this is what was perceivably the voice of God.

[43 : 06] He says, let me choose 12,000 men and I will arise and pursue David tonight in verse 1. Now, this strategy is measured.

It's very immediate, very deadly, and he knows that David is weary and discouraged in verse 2. He calls it out. So, that's why he's going to strike quickly.

David's vulnerable, let's strike quickly, and strike down only the king in verse 2. Let's take out the guy and look at his aim. He then says in verse 3, I will bring all the people back to you, and all the people will be at peace.

Singing kumbaya, got David out of the picture, and we'll just unite all the men, and we'll do this thing right. Man, this is a brilliant plan.

I mean, it's great. It's logical. In fact, the advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom, but also in all the elders of Israel in verse 4.

[44 : 15] And so, humanly speaking, Ahithophel is wise, and this is the kind of counsel that makes evil feel inevitable, right? Like, unstoppable. Like, this is the end. But Absalom says, eh, it's good, but call Hushai, the Archites also, and let us hear what he has to say in verse 5.

Praise the Lord. And the small decision actually becomes a turning point in this passage. Hushai speaks boldly, playing on Absalom's pride, but also his fear.

He says in verse 7, this time the counsel of Ahithophel has given is not good. I love how that's stated in English. This time the counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good.

Matter of fact, he says, you know that your father and his men are mighty men. David is like a bear, robbed of her cubs.

He is an expert in war. If the attack goes bad, even the valiant men will utterly melt with fear. Hushai offers an alternative here in verse 11 that Absalom really wants to hear.

[45 : 35] All Israel can be gathered to you. This is the interesting part. From Dan to Beersheba, the entirety of the kingdom can all be gathered to you and that you go to the battle in person.

You see the title of chapter 18, right? You see what's happening here. You go to the battle in person and we shall come upon you to help you or harm you.

That's one or the other, we'll find out. And we will come upon you as dew falls on the ground. this is exaggerated, flattering, strategically inferior to Absalom, but yet Absalom and his men of Israel say, the council of Hushai is better in verse 14.

Then in a pivotal moment, the narrator interrupts the accounts and gives the most important statement and breaks up what's happening in history and says, this is why this is happening.

We need to pay attention when a narrator, an author of a book, interrupts the narrative. The narrator says, for the Lord has ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel so that the Lord might bring harm upon Absalom.

[47 : 07] Two components under the sovereign hand of God are at play here. The defeat of Ahithophel's counsel and the harm and judgments to be brought upon Absalom in verse 14.

Verse 14 is a key to the entire chapter. Ahithophel's counsel was good in military terms, but Hushai's was better only because God determined that it would prevail.

It wasn't Ahithophel or Hushai that were in control of this. Do you see that? It was God who was in control. God swayed the hearts of men to take Hushai's advice.

In other words, the plan that really mattered was not Ahithophel's or Hushai's at all, but the Lord's plan. It just so happened that Hushai's was synced with God's plan, with his hand, guiding history.

And from there, we see the narrative, the story move very quickly to prepare us for the title of chapter 18.

[48 : 25] Hushai sends urgent words to David. The men are basically being chased by Absalom. They're hiding in a well, but they finally get to David. And David runs across the Jordan.

They find great provisions in verse 29 in Mahaniam. But meanwhile, back in Israel, Absalom gathers forces in verse 23, and when Ahithophel sees his counsel rejected, it's a pretty deep blow to him.

And God's word unfolds in the life and the death here of Ahithophel. His counsel is rejected, he goes home, he sets his business in order, and he takes his own life.

The man whose counsel seemed like the word of God could not survive the defeat of his own word. What a reminder that when evil plans threaten our confidence in God's word, God's plan is still superior.

Sure, human plans can be brilliant. They seem right. They may seem persuasive. They might seem unstoppable.

[49 : 43] But this means that the church cannot be necessarily intimidated by impressive plans set against Jesus Christ and his kingdom.

What are we to fear, church? how quickly that we forget the plan to destroy David failed.

The plan to destroy Jesus failed. The plan to silence the church in the book of Acts failed.

And every plan raised against Christ and his bride will ultimately fail. Praise God indeed.

You ever see the unstoppable nature of these plans against the church? I mean, we're watching right now in history the rise and this massive shift in culture and religion today.

[50 : 50] Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world and the only choice for Islam is to convert or die.

That's it. The future doesn't look very charming with those statistics in mind.

it doesn't look very easy for the church. But you see, the Lord rules the outcome and his word always prevails.

We know how the story ends. We sang that this morning and praise the Lord because we do. We do. we've walked through a stretch of David's life that is so dark.

He's lied to. He's cursed. He's betrayed. He's humiliated. There's a plan to destroy him. Thinking of all the Psalms that David has written during this dark season of his life where there's words, there's actions, there's plans, all against him, evil surrounding him.

[52 : 19] You read Psalm 3, you read Psalm 4, these are the words of David here and now as he was on the run. Psalm 61, Psalm 62, this was dark.

And in every scene evil feels like it's gaining ground. Words distort, actions wound, and plans seem certain. And yet, what have we seen?

Not one moment escaped the word of God, right? Not one action overturned the purpose of God, and not one plan succeeded against the will of God.

Why? Because the evil that God hates is mysteriously governed by what he has promised. Christ, and his promises will come to fruition.

This isn't just David's story. This is how God's people are called to live. If we want to know truth, we look at Jesus Christ, don't we? Evil words condemned Jesus, evil actions crucified him, evil plans executed him, but the cross was not the failure of God's word, word.

[53 : 35] It was the fulfillment of it. Praise the Lord. Church, don't let any other voice interpret our lives. We need to trust in God's word.

So, church, evil cannot revise what God has already said. God's word still stands, God's word is still working, and guess what? God's word will prevail all times.

Let's pray. Amen.