

May 3, 2026 - 2 Samuel 18:1-19:8 - "When Love and Justice Collide"

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Preacher: Brenton Beck

[0 : 00] Please turn with me to 2 Samuel, chapter 18. We're reading from 2 Samuel, chapter 18.

2 Samuel, chapter 18.

But the men said, The king said to them, Whatever seems best to you, I will do.

So the king stood at the side of the gate, while all the army marched out by hundreds and by thousands.

And a certain man saw it and told Joab, Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak.

[2 : 23] Joab said to the man who told him, What? You saw him? Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt.

But the man said to Joab, Oh, even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not reach out my hand against the king's son.

For in our hearing, the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, For my sake, protect the young man Absalom. On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life, And there's nothing hidden from the king, Then you yourself would have stood aloof.

Joab said, I will not waste time like this with you. And he took three javelins in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom, While he was still alive in the oak.

And ten young men, Joab's armor bearers, Surrounded Absalom and struck him and killed him.

Then Joab blew the trumpet and the troops came back from pursuing Israel, For Joab restrained them.

[3 : 31] And they took Absalom and threw him into a great pit in the forest And raised over him a great heap of stones. And all Israel fled, everyone to his own home.

Now Absalom, in his lifetime, had taken and set up for himself The pillar that is in the king's valley. For he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance.

He called the pillar after his own name, And it is called Absalom's monument to this day. When Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, said, Let me run and carry news to the king that the Lord has delivered him from the hand of his enemies.

And Joab said to him, You are not to carry news today. You may carry news another day, But today you shall carry no news, Because the king's son is dead. Then Joab said to the Cushite, Go, tell the king what you have seen.

The Cushite bowed before Joab and ran. Then Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, said again to Joab, Come what may, let me also run after the Cushite. And Joab said, Why will you run, my son, Seeing that you will have no reward for the news?

[4 : 46] Come what may, he said, I will run. So he said to him, Run! Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, And out ran the Cushite.

Now David was sitting between the two gates, And the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall. And when he lifted up his eyes and looked, He saw a man running.

The watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, If he is alone, there is news in his mouth. And he drew nearer and nearer. The watchman saw another man running.

And the watchman called to the gate and said, See, another man running alone. The king said, He also brings news. The watchman said, I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz, The son of Zadok.

And the king said, He is a good man and comes with good news. Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, All is well. And he bowed before the king with his face to the earth and said, Blessed be the Lord your God who has delivered up the men Who raised their hand against my lord the king.

[5 : 57] And the king says, Is it well with a young man, Absalom? Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, your servant, I saw a great commotion, But I do not know what it was.

And the king said, Turn aside and stand here. So he turned aside and stood still. And behold, the Cushite came.

And the Cushite said, Good news for my lord, the king, For the lord has delivered you this day From the hand of all who rose up against you. The king said to the Cushite, Is it well with the young man, Absalom?

And the Cushite answered, May the enemies of my lord, the king, And all who rise up against you for evil Be like that young man. And the king was deeply moved, And went up to the chamber over the gate, And wept.

And as he went, he said, Oh, my son Absalom, My son, my son Absalom, Would I had died instead of you, Oh, Absalom, my son, my son.

[7 : 14] It was told, Joab, Behold, the king is weeping And mourning for Absalom.

So the victory that day Was turned into mourning for all the people. For the people heard that day, The king is grieving for his son.

And the people stole into the city that day As people steal in Who are ashamed when they flee in battle. The king covered his face, And the king cried with a loud voice, Oh, my son Absalom, Oh, Absalom, My son, My son.

Then Joab came into the house To the king and said, You have today covered with shame The faces of all your servants Who have this day saved your life And the lives of your sons And your daughters And the lives of your wives And your concubines Because you love those who hate you And hate those who love you.

For you have made it clear today That commanders and servants Are nothing to you. For today I know that if Absalom were alive And all of us were dead today Then you would be pleased.

[8 : 37] Now therefore arise, Go out, And speak kindly to your servants. For I swear by the Lord, If you do not go, Not a man will stay with you this night, And this will be worse for you Than all the evil that has come upon you From your youth until now.

Then the king arose And took his seat in the gate And the people were all told, Behold, the king is sitting in the gate.

And all the people came Before the king. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. I want to ask a question For anybody to speak up.

If you were guilty of something, What would you rather have? Would you rather have love Or justice? If you were guilty.

All right, we have some honest souls in here. Now if you were wounded By somebody, There's an offense against you.

[9 : 59] What would you rather have? Love for you Or justice on your path? You see where I'm getting at here. It's a little bit of a pickle That we find ourselves in.

Because it depends on the situation Whichever one seems to overthrow the other. This is the tension we live in In our world today. Many of us answer differently.

I heard some justice people. Well done on the first question. But I didn't answer justice On the first question. If I'm guilty of something, I want love.

Help me. Come on. I'm not that bad. Right? I think that's kind of the human nature. We want love. We want grace When we are guilty of something.

When we're guilty, We want mercy. When we're wounded, We want justice. This is the tension of human nature. And this is one of the deepest agonies Of what we experience Of living in a fallen world Like ours today.

[11 : 00] And it feels like Justice and love Are almost impossible To hold together. And this is the tension That's in 2 Samuel today.

There's a tension between Seeing through justice And upholding love. And David's not just dealing With a political enemy In this passage.

He's dealing with His rebellious son, Absalom. Absalom is a son With a death warrant For leading a rebellion Against his father, David.

We remember that Absalom Murdered his brother Amnon, Stole the hearts of Israel, Publicly humiliated, Vilely humiliated his father, And took the throne for himself And raised an entire army Against David.

So justice says, Absalom must be stopped. But love says, Well, this is David's son.

[12:04] Right? That tension isn't theoretical. It's the ache of every parent In this room today Or on the live stream Who knows their child is wrong And knows justice Has to be carried out But still loves them so deeply.

It's the burden of any leader, A pastoral leader Who wants to show mercy But knows others will be harmed If a situation Or an evil situation Goes unaddressed. Or it's even a church-wide issue Where restoration Through church discipline Cannot be We can't pretend like sin Isn't going to damage people If it's not addressed.

The tension is Absalom must be stopped By justice being served. But the other side of it Is it's David's son How do we uphold love?

Now we need to define Some terms here Because I've had Some numerous discussions With church members About Hebrew words That's always a fun topic When you're a pastor For some reason That's the fun topics We talk about Some people talk about sports We talk about Hebrew words And now justice In biblical times Especially in Hebrew Is not necessarily Equated with punishment Kind of like what it's Emphasized today Like justice means Punishment Biblical justice Is actually much different It means setting things right There's a positive outlook With biblical justice And it is always relational To make things restored It means upholding God's order Protecting what is good And restoring what sin Has torn apart It's the difference Between justice From then to today It's important to define that term Y'all could hear A whole different sermon If that term isn't defined Now love Is also something interesting too The Hebrew word for love Ahav Can carry the idea Of affection It can carry the idea Of attachment It can carry the idea Of loyal devotion And now David's love for Absalom He loves his son It's not fake And David is not looking at The death warrant For an enemy here But he's looking At his son Who's wanted This is why the passage The death of God Absalom deserves Absalom deserves Death He deserves death But David loves him The kingdom The kingdom needs justice The kingdom needs Restored Relationally

[15:02] For God's people But the father Wants mercy And sin Sin has created A situation Where love And justice Seem impossible To hold together I already Indicted All y'all With the question We have that Same tension Today Don't we So for that The main point That I want To argue today Is that Sin tears Love and justice Apart But Christ Brings them Together At the cross And so What I'm going To do Is I'm going To argue The tension Through three Tension points In the passage Where love And justice Are really Mixing like Water and oil And I want To answer This main point I really want This to be Teased out Towards the end So stay awake Stay engaged Keep your Bible Open And for any Note takers This sermon Is titled When love And justice

Collide And let's Look at Three tension Points In this passage And see How sin Tears love And justice Apart But then Finally See at the end How Christ Brings them Together at the Cross Let's pray As we enter In Father We come To you I come To you So Weak And needy Myself Needing you To speak Where my Words fail I mean Your word To overcome My Fleshness I pray Lord That you Help All of Our flesh To submit To the Rule Of your Word Pray That all Of us Are receptive Even myself In this Preaching Moment To be Receptive Of your Guiding Spirits By the Power Of your Holy Spirit That we May hear From you Today We pray This in Jesus name Amen Amen The first Tension point

That I want Us to see Is a The tension Point when Love refuses Justice When love Refuses Justice We find David here In verse One He's no Longer Fleeing So this Is good In previous Chapters He was Driven Out Of Jerusalem By his Own Son Absalom Who Led A Rebellion You might Remember That from Developing In chapter 15 But now David Begins To act Again Praise The Lord David Is Assembling He's Being A King Again In Verse One And Two And He Organizes An Army And Appoints Three Commanders Over Different Divisions Of The Army He raises Up He sets Joab Over One Third Abishai Against Another Third And Ittai The Gittite Against The Other Third And All Of These Men Are Loyal

Men Joab Supremely Loyal To David He Knows David In And Out He's That Best Friend That Knows All Your Flaws All Your Secrets And Still Wants To Hang Out With You Some Of You Don't Have Friends Like That They Are Very Good Friends To Have Joab Is That Friend To David And And Ittai The Gittite Is An Interesting Loyal Friend Of David He's The Foreigner That Was Trying To Flee Jerusalem With David And David Instructed Him Well Go Back We're Going Into The Wilderness Things Are Uncertain Here At Least You'll Be Taken Care Of And Not Be Back As A Foreigner Again In A Strange Land And These Are Loyal!

Now David I Gotta Commend David He Wants To Join The Party He Wants To Join The Fight He Wants To Go To Battle With Them But The Wise People Decide To Say Well David You Are Worth More Than 10,000 Men This Whole Fight Is To Kill You David So Probably Not The Wisest Thing Because We Don't Got A King We Don't Got A Kingdom And Then All Of A We're Going To Be Serving Absalom So He Stays Back He Stays At The Gates Watches This Army March Out And You Can See The Scene Setting Can't You Armies Headed Out And The Men Are Departing And David Speaks These Chapter Shaping Words Look With Me In Verse 5 He Says!

[19:38] Deal Gently For My Sake With The Young Man Absalom It's Interesting That The Basis Of Dealing Gently With Absalom Is For David's Sake For Absalom's Sake That's Basically Garbage That Means Nothing Absalom Is A Rebel There's A Death Warrant For Him But He Tries To Spin It For The King's Sake As A King's Order As An Honorable Duty To The King For My Sake Deal Gently The Young Man Absalom Here We See David's Heart He Speaks Like A King Here But He Feels Like A Father He's Torn Here Absalom Is A Rebel He's A Murderer He's A Traitor David Calls Him The Young Man Where Others Are Seeing Sin

David Sees A Son And This Is Moving This Is Moving Sentimentally Moving Here But It Is Also Supremely Dangerous It Is Dangerous Where David Is Right Now David Has Repeatedly Throughout This Chapter Throughout Chapters Before Through Context He Has Failed To Deal Rightly With Sin In His Own House He's Failed Utterly Miserably He's Like Eli With His With Eli's Sons A While Ago We Saw I Mean David Didn't Deal Rightly With Amnon After Amnon Violated Tamar Back In Chapter 13 He Did Not Deal Rightly With Absalom After Absalom Murdered Amnon In Revenge For What Amnon Did For Tamar And He Did Not Bring Absalom Back To The Kingdom With

Evidence That Absalom Has Repented Or That Any Justice Restoration Relational Justice Was Done He Hasn't Dealt With Anything And He's Not Dealing Well Right Here This Is What I Discovered In The Passage About This Week And This Is Very Contextually Important What Did David Want Just Like Us David Wanted Love Without Justice When It Has To Do With Something That Somebody We Love Has Committed He Wanted Mercy Without Accountability He Wanted Peace Without Truth And The Issue Requires Us To Be Honest In David Shoes Is This Really Love I Do Believe That There Is Genuineness Of His Love Here But I Also Believe That There Is A Sense Of Fear Because Why What Would Motivate Any

Of Us To Avoid A Loving Punishment Allowing Our Kids To Just Learn The Hard Way Right We Say That We Just Want To Be Gracious Right When The Truth Is We Actually Just Want To Avoid Conflict We Just Name It Graciousness But In Reality It It's Fear Because We Just Want To Avoid Conflict Or We Say We Just Trying To Keep The Peace When The Truth Is We Just Avoiding! Obedience We Just Labeling It Something Or We Say We Don't Want To Be Harsh When The Truth Is We Just Don't Want To Do The Painful Work Of Truth Telling Of Discipline Of Correction Or Restoration But What We See Here Is That Peace Accomplished Outside Of Truth Is An Illusion Peace Accomplished Outside Of Truth Is An Illusion And When Peace Is Accomplished Outside Of Truth It Postpones Greater Pain To Come And This Battle Proves It Look At This Battle In Verse 6 David's Servants Defeat Israel The Forest Devoured Many I Believe Maybe The Writer Of Lord Of The Rings Probably Got The Tree Beard Idea From Here The Forest Devoured Many You Get A Creative

[24:11] Writer Hearing That And He's Like Oh I Got An Idea There They Go The Forest Devoured Many The The The The Climate The The Whole The Whole Setting Of This Battle Was Really Treacherous Land Many People Died Not Because Of Sword But Because This Place Was Just Not The Best Place To Fight 20,000 Men Die Look At The Pain That's Happening Here Literally Twice The Value Of David's Life Has Died And We Have To Remember This Is So Important Church Like This Isn't Israel Fighting Against The Philistines This Isn't Israel Fighting Against The Ammonites This Is Israel Fighting Against Israel Civil

War This Is Horrible Peace Accomplished Outside Of Truth Is An Illusion And When It Is Accomplished Outside Of Truth The Pain Is So Great I Love How The Narrator Slows Down To Focus On Absalom It's Almost Comical Isn't It Absalom Coming Riding In On His Mule I'll Say One Last Time Gaston You Know With The Muscles Riding In On His Mule I Can't Get That Image Out Of My Head I Thank My Disney Loving Kids So We Just See Him Flexing You Know Coming In On A Mule He's Got The Riz Everything Gen Z Still Carrying The Appearance Of Royalty Right Riding On A Mule Was Symbolic Of This

Person Is Very Kingly This Is Royal So He's Riding Into This Battle And He Passes Under This Great Oak And He's Caught In The Branches Of It Caught So Tightly In The Branches Of This Oak That The Mule Runs Away And He's Left Dangling In A Tree I Mean I Don't Think That These Trees Were Alive I Don't Think This Is Tree Beard Okay But He's Suspended In The Air As His Mule Abandons Him And He's Left There How Humiliating To This Guy Who Is All About Appearance His Entire Campaign To Rise The Rebellion Against David Was All About Appearance How About This For Appearance It's Almost Like As The Psalms

Say The Lord Laughs In Derision Of The Evil In The World The Man Who Exalted Himself Is Now Helpless The Man Who Wanted A Throne Has Completely Lost Even The Mule All Symbols Of Royalty Are Gone He's Just A Man Dangling In A Tree Like A Dummy Soldiers Find This Scene This Humiliating Scene And Hesitate To Take Any Shots At Absalom They Heard The Words Of David Of This Father This King He said Deal Gently Until Joab Catches Wind Of The Situation Immediately Finds Absalom Thrusts Three Javelins Into His Heart And Then Allows His Armor Bearers To To Finish Him Off Joab Knows What David Refused To Face David Was No Dummy He Knew What

Justice Needed To Look Like But Joab Was Willing To Actually Bring About True Justice Restoration Relational Restoration In The Kingdom The Kingdom Would Never Be Safe If Absalom Lived Never Be Safe Justice Had To Be Served If If The Image Couldn't Get Any More Humiliating It Even Was Humiliating After Absalom Died Absalom's Lifeless Body Was Humiliated Continued To Be Humiliated By Burying Being Buried Quickly In A Heap Of Stones!

[28 : 58] And Even Despite This Local Monument That Stood At The End There Was Nothing In Absalom's Name That Would Call Him Righteous And Everything At The End Of His Life Showed That He Died In Complete Shame Now We Can Point At Absalom We Can See Like Like All Of His Failures Right We Can Look In Like The Gospels Of Peter Trying To Chop Roman Soldiers Ear Off You But Before We Point At Absalom I Believe That We Have To See Our Proclivity Of Having The Same Struggles As Absalom Did We Are Not Too Far We Share A lot In Common With Absalom We Often Want Our Own Kingdoms And Our Own Ways And Our Own Terms We Want

Our Own Savings Account Plans We Want Our Own Budgets That We Set Based On Our Own Goals We Want Our Own Family Size We Want Our Own Family Values We Want Our Own Things And Our Own Ways And Our Own Plans That Is The Way Of Humanity And That Is The Way Of Absalom In Fact Every Single Negative Detail Of The Human Condition Is Not Too Far From Home In Our Own Hearts If We Can Be Honest Church We See Our Ourselves In David's Failings We See Ourselves In Joab's Failings We See Ourselves In Absalom's Failings I Mean Paul Even Saw His Own Failings In 1 Timothy 1 15 He Says The Saying Is Trustworthy And Deserving Of Full Acceptance I Believe I Titled That Sermon Wretched Christians Or Wretched Something That Jesus Christ Came Into The World To Save!

Paul Shared The Apostle Paul Shared In Common Every Failing Of Absalom David And Job And We Do Too It's Very Easy For Us To Point Fingers And Very Hard To See Our Own Sin I Hope That We See That This Isn't Just About Their Story This Is The Human Heart That Operates Apart From Grace That Does Things Our Own Ways And The Question Looms In This Passage Okay So Justice We See Justice Absalom Dead Humiliated Dead And We See Love Waiting Back At The Gate Can Love And Justice Be Reconciled It Seems Like An Impossible Situation Well Let's Continue To See How Love Responds To The Battle The Battle Victory We See The Second Tension The Second Point Of Tension When Justice Wounds

Love We See This From Verse 19 All The Way To 33 Verse 19 After Absalom's Death The Million Dollar Question Ringing Out In This Battlefield Well Who's Going To Tell David Right Everyone Heard To Deal Gently With The Young Man Who's Going To Tell David I Mean Joab Joab's Dead That's It He Didn't He Didn't Obey Him Him Him As Wants To Run Here In This Passage Very Quickly With The Good News Because From His Perspective The Kingdom Is Restored The Battle Is Won This Is Victory Like The Lord Has Saved David Again From The Hand Of The Enemy So Him Him Doesn't I There's No!

Indication Him Ahimeaz knows actually what happened. He just heard the trumpet and said, hot dog, we won, right? But Joab knows that this would be a problem. David needs to know the details. It's a little bit more complicated than what Ahimeaz may understand in verse 20. He understands that David will not hear Ahimeaz's news first as a king, but he will hear the news first as a father.

[33 : 31] And he needs to hear the news as a father. He needs to understand that the Lord has brought about justice, restoration, relational restoration, good positive outcome for the kingdom of God.

And so Joab sends the Cushite, an eyewitness of Absalom's death, probably one of the armor bearers around Absalom in verse 21. And so the two messengers go out, and now we have the movie of the mighty python and the holy grail, the messengers arriving at the castle. And so I think we got a lot of writing scripts from this chapter, believe it or not. Ahimeaz runs past the Cushite, probably takes a shortcut, a little more fit. Ahimeaz arrives and announces this vague victory that he knows. He heard the trumpet, he says, we won. But the father speaks. He says in verse 28 and 29, is it well with the young man Absalom?

The question reveals David's heart. Joab knows David better than anybody. He knows what David needs to hear. He didn't need to hear about victory. David's only concern is as a father at this point. He does not ask first about the army. He doesn't ask about casualties.

He doesn't ask about the kingdom. He asks about a son in verse 29. And the Cushite finally arrives and tells David the truth very carefully, but very clearly. In verse 31 and 32, Absalom is dead.

This is a very low moment, another low moment for David. David breaks down completely. It's almost poetic in nature. He says, oh, my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom, when I had died instead of you.

[35 : 50] Oh, my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom. David is completely shattered. Justice has wounded love.

And we need to let that sit for a moment. Because this is where the tension between love and justice find its tension here. Because they meet here. And this is important. It comes back into focus that justice has been served, but love has not been comforted by justice. Biblical justice should be very comforting by the nature of the word. And this is what sin does. This is exactly what sin does. It creates victories that feel like funerals, where people should be celebrating, dancing, but instead people are weeping. It creates moments where justice may feel necessary, but love is still wounded and bleeding because of justice. I don't want us to incorrectly sanitize this moment, nor rush to critique David, nor rush to critique David, like so quickly that we forget that David is a father, hearing that his son, the heir of his throne is dead. Yes, Absalom is guilty. Absalom was dangerous, self-absorbed. But none of that makes David's grief fake. This was true grief.

I mean, enter his grief for a moment. What might be his thoughts? What often happens when we're grieving? We say, if only, right? We think back, we reflect back. I'm sure David was thinking, if only I had dealt with Amnon the way I ought to have. If only I had protected Tamar, instead of just been mad about the situation. If only I had not passively allowed bitterness to grow among the kingdom. If only I had restored Absalom rightly. If only I had disciplined him earlier.

If only it would have ended on the roof. If only I had died instead of Absalom. Some of us today know that kind of grief. Maybe not the same situation exactly, but that same ache of looking back and saying, if only.

[38 : 54] Like, if only we would have spoken sooner. If only we would have listened more carefully in our lives. If only we would have rejected bitterness to grow in our hearts. If only we would have just closed that door.

If only we would have confessed earlier and not hid things from our spouses. If only we would have listened to the Holy Spirit's conviction.

But here is the hard mercy of this passage. God's forgiveness can be real. And consequences can still remain.

We've been seeing this unfold since Nathan spoke to David in chapter 12. Because David is not merely grieving Absalom's death.

He's also feeling the consequences of his own sin. His own shortcomings. His own if only's. He's dealing with it all. Here we're reminded of the hardest truths of the Christian life.

[40 : 02] For all of us. That forgiveness does not always remove the consequences. Thomas Watson once said, The pleasure of sin is soon gone.

But the sting remains. Thinking back, we remember that David's sin has been put away. Praise the Lord. But his baby died.

In chapter 12. Amnon died. Chapter 13. Absalom dies here in chapter 18. In other words, the sword is still cutting through David's house.

As the prophet Nathan had spoken in chapter 12. What a whirlwind for David. Think about it. God saved David from Absalom.

Praise the Lord. And yet God still disciplined David through Absalom. Absalom. Because both of those aspects are true.

[41 : 08] God is still merciful. But his mercy does not undo every earthly sorrow. We're a reminder.

As we may experience miraculous forgiveness in our lives. Justice in our lives. Restored relationships in our lives.

And if we only interpret God's goodness through the lens of immediate relief. Immediate repair. This passage today is calling each and every one of us to a deeper maturity in the Christian faith.

Forgiveness from God does not always mean immediate relief. And that our lives forward are going to be void of the consequences.

Of what has been forgiven. This passage is calling us as a church to deeper maturity. Deeper maturity as spouses in marriage.

[42 : 12] That you may be able to forgive your spouse. But the damage is going to take many years to repair. It's going to take a lot of work. Trust takes a lot of time to build back.

Could be even broken family relationships that may seem mended on the surface. Right? But those relationships have changed. They're not the same.

You see, God may be good to us. Not only by removing pain. But by humbling us through pain.

Teaching us through pain. And making us hate sin that produced the pain.

This is the goodness of God's providence. It's calling us to maturity in our Christian lives. Under the providential hand of God.

He can both deliver and discipline at the same time. To the same situation. God can still save us while he's still humbling us.

[43 : 18] So true. And it's happening here. In David's life. David is feeling the misery of a world where justice and love no longer meet cleanly.

He loves Absalom. But Absalom's rebellion demanded there to be justice. And David is delivered from his enemy. But he's wounded over his son.

Sin has literally torn these two realities apart. And we see the effects of it in the last tension of the passage. We see all the way to chapter 19, verse 1 to 8.

Thanks, Carmen, for putting this on my radar on Monday. We see this expand. And the waves begin to reverberate of damage of what this has caused.

We see the weight of what sin has caused when justice and love don't meet. David's grief here becomes public. And we see grief misordering love.

[44 : 21] This victory turns to mourning. On behalf of one individual, this entire victory, the battle has been completely redefined.

The soldiers return in verse 3 to the city. And they're like shame dogs. You ever seen a shame dog? A bad dog? A tail between their legs?

Kind of skidding by you? Right? They come back like that. Even though they won this battle. Even though justice has been served. And the kingdom has been restored.

They literally risked their lives for David. They saved his family. They defended his kingdom.

Defeated the rebellion. Defeated the rebellion. But David makes them feel as if their loyalty was some sort of crime.

He's still crying out in verse 4. Oh, my son Absalom. Oh, Absalom, my son, my son. Now this is real sorrow.

[45 : 21] We can't treat it coldly. But his sorrow seems to be now ruling the room, if you know what I'm saying. In fact, his grief seems to be reshaping the entire meaning of this battle and dishonoring the people who stood loyal to God's kingdom.

One rebel is redefining an entire nation. You want to see how justice and love don't mix? This is it. And it gets worse. Now, Joab, the trustworthy friend of David, right?

Knows David inside and out. Still is his friend. He confronts David sharply. And I believe that this is one of the most pivotal moments of Joab's counsel in David's life.

He tells David that he has shamed the servants who saved his family in verse 5. His life. And Joab says, look in verse 6. You love those who hate you.

And you hate those who love you. You love Ahab. You love those who hate you. You have affection.

[46 : 33] You have attachment. You have loyalty to those who hate you. You hate those who love you. And some of us might be like, whoa, what an empathetic response of Joab to this crying king, right?

What in the cold-hearted hardness is this all about, Joab? Because Joab's words are harsh.

Confronting reality in our lives with truth is harsh sometimes.

But isn't the warning true? David's private grief is now becoming a public failure. It's redefining the nation of God on account of one rebel.

Joab's not simply saying, David, you are too sad. Suck it up, buttercup. That's Carmen's word.

Maybe he got it from his mom.

He is saying, David, your love is now disordered. Your grief over Absalom has made you unjust towards your servants who loved you, who fought for you, who saved your life.

[47 : 58] In other words, love and justice are still torn apart. And David's love for his rebel son is still blinding him to justice and his faithful servants. And so Joab, in verse 7, told him, Best counsel ever.

Arise, go out, and speak kindly to your servants. Be the king God's nation needs. In other words, David cannot let his grief as a father to erase his calling as king.

David follows through the gate, the place of public leadership. And all the people come before him in verse 8. David can't raise Absalom back.

He can't undo Absalom's vile actions. They're irreversible. But he can still shepherd God's people.

When love is ruled by grief, it can become unjust towards people that God has still called us to love.

And this matters because grief can quietly become a throne. When we have misordered priorities in our lives, we kind of create thrones.

[49 : 14] And this can even happen in grief, real grief in our lives. It can begin to command our schedule, to begin to command our tone, or our relationships, our parenting, our marriages, our ministry, even our obedience to God.

And we may not say that grief is my God, and we explicitly say that, you know, my grief is too much, and it's become my God, and I'm worshiping my grief. But we begin to live as though sorrow has the final word to dictate our lives.

Now, it's not saying like, you know, the old saying, you know, just pull up your bootstraps, you sissies, right? Get over it. Or pretend like everything's fine when it's actually not, and you just rush through the process of mourning.

I mean, that's not right either on that side of the spectrum, right? The Bible gives a lot of margin for mourning, for lament, many psalms on that matter. But what it is saying is that as life inevitably continues on, we must remember that our grief must be brought somewhere.

Our grief must be directed to God. It cannot be self-absorbed, private stuff. It has to be directed somewhere.

[50 : 38] Not self-loathing, but actually God-honoring. Notice the Bible doesn't say, hide your heart, in Psalm 62, verse 8.

It says, actually, trust in Him at all times, O people. Pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us. Notice the Bible doesn't say, carry your anxieties alone, you sissies.

Right? In 1 Peter 5, 6, and 7. No, it says, humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.

You see, the issue is not whether we grieve. We're all going to grieve. Each and every one of y'all, myself included. We will be grieving very hard sometime, at some place, and some point in our lives.

But the issue is, where grief goes. Does it go to God, or does it sit on the throne in our hearts?

[51 : 43] Why? Because sometimes the most faithful thing we can do is rise, go to the gates, and speak kindly to God's people that have not been taken away from us.

Not because our sorrow is small, but because God is still God. He's still carrying out both love and justice.

And sometimes it really hurts. But God is still God. And we can grieve with hope. Friends, give me another five minutes.

I know we're running late. I just want to land this. Because remember at the beginning I said, sin tears love and justice apart. Haven't we just seen that?

And it's like a massacring, slaughtering tear. It's leaving David completely helpless in his tower, in his private room. But Christ brings them together at the cross.

[52 : 46] This is so vital to see. Remember David's cry, when I had died instead of you. This cry of substitution here echoes through the pages of the Old Testament, being largely left unresolved through all of those pages as love and justice continue to be torn apart because of sin.

But one day, we know one who did die instead of another. The greater son, David, Jesus, does what no human could do.

When we see Absalom humiliated, hanging in that tree, right? We remember Christ who hung on a tree. Absalom was hanging because of his rebellion, but Jesus hung on a tree because of ours. Absalom was pierced because he was guilty. He deserves death. But Jesus was pierced because he was innocent, even though he was innocent.

Absalom died as a rebel, but Jesus died for rebels like you and me. Friends, the question is not whether you have played the rebel because you have, I have, constantly do that.

[54 : 14] So the question is whether you will die clinging to your own monuments, you'll cling to your own ways, or whether you will come to the king who died for rebels like us. And through our faith in Jesus Christ, we are assured that justice does not ignore our sin.

Justice cannot ignore our sin, but it deals with it. And it was dealt with in Christ. In Christ, love does not minimize our guilt at all.

Not a drop of blood was spilled on the cross that would ever testify to that. In Christ, it bears, it bears that guilt. At the cross, God does not pretend rebels are innocent and that sin is just some little thing in this life.

No, he makes rebels sons and daughters by blood, the blood of Jesus. You see, at the cross, God does not choose love instead of justice, nor does he choose justice instead of love.

But at the cross, justice is satisfied and love triumphs. This is the good news of the gospel.

[55 : 24] The tension of this passage is resolved at the cross. love and justice must submit to God. It's the pattern of Christ.

I'll close with this one reminder. We are called to submit the essence of justice in our lives and the essence of love similarly to Christ.

Let's do that together. Let's pray. Thank you.