

We are in part 5 of our study on David in connection with our verse by verse study through the book of Hebrews. We are studying David to understand why the Holy Spirit included him in the famed Hall of Faith found in **Hebrews 11:32**.

Hebrews 11:32

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of **David** and Samuel and the prophets.

So far we have covered David's experiences (both what happened as well as how he felt) from the time he was a boy up until the time he became king. Then last week we covered the early part of his kingship (the time of glory and blessing) as well as his debacle with Bathsheba. Interestingly, we learned that the story of David and Bathsheba was less about the issue of sin and what David did wrong as it was about the opportunity for the Lord to build into David's soul His attributes of mercy, pity, unfailing love and great compassion; things which David had lacked.

If David's kingdom was going to be a type of the Messiah's kingdom, then David was going to have to be conformed into the image of the Messiah; which is the reason why the Lord took David through these experiences. David had to learn how to have pity and mercy in the face of the most heinous of sins and failures; and he could best learn that through the pity and mercy that God had on him in the midst of his most heinous of sins and failures. With His unfailing love, the Lord poured compassion on David and did not take David's life even though the law would have required a life for a life.

I want you to keep in mind that the kingdom of the Messiah (which David's kingdom emulates) is now, as Jesus said, the kingdom of God is at hand (**Mark 1:15**). Thus, like David, our lives must similarly represent the Messiah; after all, we are His ambassadors (**2 Corinthians 5:20**). Therefore, our lives must also accurately reflect the life of our Messiah and should be marked with pity, mercy, unfailing love and great compassion.

When you understand this truth, you will be able to look at the circumstances in your life—even your sin—through different lenses. Instead of living in failure, condemnation, judgment, and the weight of guilt, you can understand that God is using all of these circumstances—again, even your sin—to conform you into the image of your Messiah.

Romans 8:28-29

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

The kingdom of God is at hand and the Lord is preparing you and me to be like Him—an exact representation—so we can bring His perfect light into darkness enabling others to learn what God is like through their encounters with us. Do you remember how Phillip asked Jesus to show the disciples the Father? Jesus replied to him: "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking

me to show him to you? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me (*John 14:9-11*).

In the same way, when someone meets us they should know they have had an encounter with the Living God as He expresses Himself through our bodies: His words in ours; His touch in ours; His life in ours; and His pity, mercy, great compassion and unfailing love through ours.

This is why God takes us through all the difficulty and struggles. He wants us to learn to throw off our *Old Sinful Nature*, to throw off our flesh, and trust ourselves to Him so He will have the room to fully abide within us. He wants us to let go of the control that we have over our own lives and surrender to His gentle and loving hand. And David's life gives us a beautiful picture of this process.

For David, the events with Bathsheba were like the class room studies at C.U. "Conformation University;" it was equivalent to the book work. He had learned a lot about pity, mercy, unfailing love and great compassion but he did not yet own it. It was still head knowledge. But this week we are going to look at David's field work, or his internship, for this class and see how pity, mercy, unfailing love and compassion came to define him.

I have to warn you, from here the story here gets really ugly and again we have to be prepared to see the layers of meaning that are underneath the storyline as God transforms David from a hardened merciless warrior that will kill without blinking an eye into a man of mercy and grace who emulates his Messiah.

Let's start with the prophecy that the Lord gave David through Nathan when Nathan confronted David about his sin with Bathsheba.

2 Samuel 12:10-12

From this time on, your family will live by the sword because you have despised me by taking Uriah's wife to be your own. "This is what the Lord says: Because of what you have done, I will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man before your very eyes, and he will go to bed with them in public view. You did it secretly, but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel."

So this is the prophetic backdrop to the next events of David's life. It's definitely a bummer of a prophecy to have looming over your head especially when David knows that God always does what He says and He leaves nothing undone.

The events start with David's third son, Absalom, who had a beautiful sister named Tamar. Absalom's oldest ½ brother, Amnon (David's first-born and heir to the throne), was mad crazy in love with Tamar, who just happened to be a virgin. He became obsessed with her and it totally ruled and dominated his life; he just had to have her. Amnon's friend told him to pretend he was sick and then when his dad came to check on him to ask his dad if he would send Tamar to prepare some food for him, and then she would be his. Amnon did just that; but when Tamar came he sent everyone out of the room and he raped her.

But then something really interesting happened. When he got what he thought he wanted, all his undying love suddenly turned to hate and he hated her even more than he had loved her and he kicked her out. He called to his servants and demanded, “Throw this woman out, and lock the door behind her!” Tamar tore her robe, put ashes on her head and went away crying. The whole thing was absolutely horrific and can be found in **2 Samuel 13**.

When Absalom found out what happened hate burned in his heart toward Amnon because of what he had done to his sister. David was also very angry but it does not seem that he did anything about it. He kind of turned a blind eye to the whole tragedy. This turned Absalom’s hatred into a burning desire for vengeance. It is a weird slippery slope—the dark side of anger that is. Anger left untreated can mutate into hate and hate left untreated, as we will see, mutates into something even darker, sinister, and destructive—deadly even.

We are not really sure why David did not deal with his son, but at this stage of his life my best bet would be because of his own guilt. This was probably not too long after the “incident” and I am sure Amnon would have pulled the Bathsheba card out on him and he would have just stood in his humiliation without a lot to say; feeling like a hypocrite. So David probably hoped that time would run its course and all things would be forgiven and forgotten. But that is not how things ever really work out. That concept is just some weird fortune cookie ideology; but real life is so much more brutal.

In addition, Amnon was his eldest son, the one in line for the throne; and like any dad I am sure the first-born had a special place in David’s heart and he was reluctant to do anything to hurt him or threaten his inheritance.

But Absalom had a long memory and he was biding his time to strike. Two years later Absalom tells the king that he is throwing a big party for the family and wants everyone to be there, including the king. The king declined the invitation even though Absalom really pressed him to come. Absalom then asked David to send Amnon in his stead; after all, having Prince No. 1 at your party is the next best thing to the king. David seemed to hesitate, as if he suspected something was up, but as Absalom continued to press, David finally agreed that Amnon and all the kings' sons could go to this party.

Absalom told his men: "Wait until Amnon gets drunk; then at my signal, kill him! Don't be afraid. I'm the one who has given this command. Take courage and do it! So at Absalom's signal they murdered Amnon. Then the other sons of the king jumped on their mules and fled" (**2 Samuel 13:28-29**). Kind of like his dad with Uriah, Absalom did not have the moxie to do the deed himself, but he had others do it and then he fled to the home of his Grandfather in Geshur and hid out there for 3 long years.

When David heard the news he was horrified and broken; he wept bitterly. He and his entire staff mourned Amnon's death and it took David quite a while to get over the fact that his eldest son, the heir to the throne, was murdered. In time, however, David found a way to find peace with this whole event and he longed to be reunited with Absalom; but he was unwilling to reach out to him. It seems that actually practicing pity, mercy and great compassion in the face of the most heinous of sins was harder than it seemed.

Eventually Joab, one of David's commanders, realized how much David missed Absalom and so he set up this elaborate scheme involving a woman who was

known to have great wisdom. Joab sent her to the king with a made-up story intended to evoke compassion in David's heart; and it worked. David was moved to mercy and compassion on her behalf; but she turned it all around on him. She said:

2 Samuel 14:13-14

Why don't you do as much for the people of God as you have promised to do for me? You have convicted yourself in making this decision, because you have refused to bring home your own banished son. All of us must die eventually. Our lives are like water spilled out on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God does not just sweep life away; instead, he devises ways to bring us back when we have been separated from him.

This woman's wisdom definitely penetrated David's hard warrior shell and there was a small—ever so slight—breaking. I am sure he recalled what he had penned in ***Psalms 51:11*** as he begged the Lord, "Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me." However, these thoughts of God's graciousness toward him were little more than fleeting thoughts for David told Joab that Absalom could return to Jerusalem and his own house, but he could not come before the king; which you might easily guess would totally upset Absalom.

Absalom returned to Jerusalem, but he was not allowed to see his dad. We are only part way through the semester and so far I would say that the internship was

not going so well. David had a lot more to learn in terms of pity, mercy, unfailing love and great compassion.

Absalom lived in Jerusalem for 2-years without getting to see the king and he was not happy about it. So it had been a total of 7-years since father and son were together. Absalom decided it was time to do something about it. He called for Joab to seek some help with the whole situation, but Joab just ignored him; at least until Absalom set Joab's fields on fire. This got his attention. Absalom then convinced Joab to go before the king and beg David to reconcile with him.

Now as we know from prior events, Absalom was a devious, a schemer, and patient at that. Do you really think he was ok with the fact that David never did anything to deal with Amnon and redeem his sister Tamar? Of course not; and believe me he was not desiring to see the king because he missed him so much. He had other plans; and reconciliation with the king was just a prerequisite to pulling off what he really had in mind— which was part 2 of his plan—vengeance against his father.

So Joab told David everything and at last David summoned his estranged son to the palace. Absalom bowed low before the king and David kissed him. Touching scene, so it seems, but things are not always as they seem.

Just so you know, Absalom was drop-dead gorgeous. **2 Samuel 14:25** says that from head to foot he was a perfect specimen of a man. This helped Absalom pull off the next part of his scheme and that was to seduce the people to follow him. He purchased a chariot and he hired 50 men to run ahead of him creating the appearance of royalty and importance. He knew that people are easily awed by such displays of beauty and grandeur.

Absalom would then get up early every morning and go to the gate of the city and as people were coming to bring their legal case before the king for judgment he would stop them, engage them, and listen to their plea and say:

2 Samuel 15:3-6

You've really got a strong case here! It's too bad the king doesn't have anyone to hear it. I wish I were the judge. Then everyone could bring their cases to me for judgment, and I would give them justice!" When people tried to bow before him, Absalom wouldn't let them. Instead, he took them by the hand and embraced them. Absalom did this with everyone who came to the king for judgment, and so he stole the hearts of all the people of Israel.

If you can imagine, he did this for 4 long years. I told you, this was a cunning and patient man; he would wait until everything was just right. Then finally it was all set and Absalom asked David for leave to go to Hebron to sacrifice; he said it was part of some oath he made to the Lord when he was living in Geshur. Remember, Hebron is the place where David first set up his throne for the 7-years before he ruled all Israel.

David released him and when Absalom got to Hebron he sent messengers to every part of Israel to stir up a rebellion against the king. His message read: "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, 'Absalom is king at Hebron'" (***2 Samuel 15:10***)! In addition, when Absalom left Jerusalem he took with him 200 men who actually knew nothing about the rebellion. But that did not matter;

often appearances sometimes speak louder than facts. He also called for one of David's key counselors and before long many others joined and the conspiracy gained momentum. A messenger soon arrived in Jerusalem to tell David, "All Israel has joined Absalom in a conspiracy against you" (**2 Samuel 15:13**).

I want you to think about these events in terms of David's internship and his having to learn pity, mercy, compassion and unfailing love. Remember David's student profile. He is a warrior, a king who is surrounded with mighty men that have literally demolished anyone who has ever tried to come against them. In reality, this pathetic rebellion was nothing. He could have squashed it so fast that Absalom would have been dead before he ever even reached Jerusalem.

But instead of resorting to what he knew, which was violence, David did something that surprised everyone; he up and fled. He said, "Then we must flee at once, or it will be too late!"... "Hurry! If we get out of the city before Absalom arrives, both we and the city of Jerusalem will be spared from disaster" (**2 Samuel 15:14**).

If we did not know better, we would think David had become soft, gutless, not standing up for his responsibilities and his people the way he should. What kind of shepherd behaves like this? What kind of shepherd just lets the enemy come walk into town and have his way without even giving him a fight? Will Absalom really care for the kingdom; after all he is attempting to ascend to the throne through the ways of men, the ways of kings. Treason, betrayal, sedition, this is not how David ascended to the throne.

But David is the kind of shepherd that does not walk in the ways of kings, the ways of men. David has become the kind of shepherd that would give up his very

life for his sheep and would even do the unthinkable (giving up and walking away) not wanting any one of his sheep to be hurt, even those who would hurt him. He would give up the power and the position and take the pain so his people would not have to.

So the king, his household, and his troops all left Jerusalem; David left only 10 concubines to care for the palace and keep it in order. Zadok (the priest) and all the Levites also came along, carrying the Ark of the Covenant of God. They set down the Ark of God and offered sacrifices until everyone had passed out of the city. Then David instructed Zadok to take the Ark of God back into the city. He said, "If the Lord sees fit," ... "he will bring me back to see the Ark and the Tabernacle again. But if he is through with me, then let him do what seems best to him" (**2 Samuel 15:25-26**).

Wow; I can hardly even believe that statement is coming from a man who was the envy of kings. So once again, as in the case of Saul, we see David leaves everything in the hands of his God. He does not hold on to power or position, but he sees every aspect of his kingdom as entirely fungible—not really belonging to him but to God.

This is remarkable. His own son has betrayed him; his own flesh and blood has come against him; the one to whom he showed mercy and compassion has returned the favor by leading others in revolt against him. And David just lets it happen trusting that the Lord will sort it all out one way or another.

Are you starting to get the parallel here to the Messiah's kingdom—since that is what this story is all about? If David's kingdom is a type of the Messiah, then we know there had to be a Judas, one who is part of the "family" and yet was filled by

Satan in an attempt to overthrow the kingdom. Absalom shared bread at his father's table, just like Judas did with Jesus. This was prophesied about in **Psalm 41:9**, "even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." David thought he was writing about Absalom but he was also prophetically writing about Judas. Jesus actually quotes this psalm in **John 13:18** and applies it directly to Judas.

Remember when Judas brought people against Jesus? What did Jesus do? Did He fight? Did He protect what was rightfully His? Did He argue or resist? Did He call down the angels to protect him? No like David, he just let it happen and trusted Himself to His heavenly Father.

David was not being yellow and spineless; rather, he was being more of a man than probably any of us could ever imagine. He was setting for us an example of the Messiah. In the face of the most heinous of sins, he was willing to think of others as more important than himself. Just like Jesus did for you and for me. David was learning his lesson about pity, mercy, unfailing love and great compassion; and this time it is for real.

David's departure from Jerusalem is symbolic of the Messiah's rejection and departure from the city on His way to the cross. And we will see that his return is a symbol of the Messiah's resurrection, victory over Satan, and victory over Judas (and all the Judas' in our lives).

Let me explain something. This was no easy thing for David. He was sad for his son. He was sad for those he knew would die in the ensuing battle. He was sad for those in his kingdom who would never understand what he was doing. We are told that David walked up the road to the Mount of Olives weeping as he went.

His head was covered and his feet were bare as a sign of mourning (**2 Samuel 15:30**).

Then a man named Shimei, of Saul's family, comes out of a village and starts to curse David. He actually had the nerve to throw stones at David, the king's officers, and all the mighty warriors that surrounded David. "Get out of here you murder, you scoundrel!" He shouted at David. "The Lord is paying you back for murdering Saul and his family. You stole his throne, and now the Lord has given it to your son Absalom. At last you will taste some of your own medicine, you murderer" (**2 Samuel 16:7-8**)!

David's warriors, of course, wanted to cut his head off, but David would not let them. He said, "If the Lord has told him to curse me, who am I to stop him?" ... "my own son is trying to kill me. Shouldn't this relative of Saul have even more reason to do so?" Leave Him alone and let him curse, for the Lord has told him to do it. And perhaps the Lord will see that I am being wronged and will bless me because of these curses" (**2 Samuel 16:10-12**).

Again, we are given a picture of Jesus being led out of Jerusalem subject to mocking, shame, humiliation, and brutal treatment. In fact, the way Shimei acted foreshadowed the way the high priest would treat Jesus—the high priest being one who belonged to the ruling family of the day that was rejected by the Lord in the same way that Saul's family was rejected by the Lord).

Matthew 26:65-68

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy;

what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death!" Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?"

Meanwhile Absalom and his entourage arrived in Jerusalem and Absalom's chief advisor recommended that he go sleep with his father's concubines for then all Israel would know that he had insulted his father beyond hope of reconciliation, so they would give all their support to Absalom. This he did; exactly as was spoken in Nathan's prophecy. They set up a tent on the palace roof where everyone could see it and Absalom went into the tent to sleep with each of his father's concubines (**2 Samuel 16:15-23**).

Next Absalom's chief advisor said, "Let me choose twelve thousand men to start out after David tonight. I will catch up to him while he is weary and discouraged. He and his troops will panic and everyone will run away. Then I will kill only the king and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride returns to her husband" (**2 Samuel 17:1-3**).

This plan seemed good to Absalom but then one of David's old advisors, who stayed in Jerusalem to try and counter the advice of Absalom's chief advisor, gave Absalom totally contrary advice intending to trip-up Absalom. He said:

2 Samuel 17:8-13

You know your father and his men; they are mighty warriors. Right now they are as enraged as a mother bear who has been robbed of her cubs. And

remember that your father is an experienced man of war. He won't be spending the night among the troops. He has probably already hidden in some pit or cave. And when he comes out and attacks and a few of your men fall, there will be panic among your troops, and the word will spread that Absalom's men are being slaughtered. Then even the bravest soldiers, though they have the heart of a lion, will be paralyzed with fear. For all Israel knows what a mighty warrior your father is and how courageous his men are.

"I recommend that you mobilize the entire army of Israel, bringing them from as far away as Dan in the north and Beersheba in the south. That way you will have an army as numerous as the sand on the seashore. And I advise that you personally lead the troops. When we find David, we'll fall on him like dew that falls on the ground. Then neither he nor any of his men will be left alive. And if David were to escape into some town, you will have all Israel there at your command. Then we can take ropes and drag the walls of the town into the nearest valley until every stone is torn down."

Absalom bought it hook line and sinker. He thought this was the best advice and his chief advisor was so publically humiliated that he left the palace and went and hung himself. David was warned about the battle plans and prepared his troops for war. His troops, however, would not let him fight but insisted that he stay behind. David agreed but instructed them to deal gently with young Absalom; and all the troops heard David give this command to his commanders.

I am sure this confused his commanders: "deal gently with young Absalom." You know they were thinking: "What? Are you losing it? This is the one who wants

to kill you. This is the one who betrayed you. This is the one who seduced the people. This is the one who chased us out of the palace. This is the enemy and if we don't kill him he will kill you. And you are asking us to have pity, mercy, and compassion on him—absolutely not!”

So the battle began and there was a great slaughter and the Israelite troops were beaten back by David's men. During the battle, Absalom came unexpectedly upon some of David's men. He tried to escape but as he rode beneath the thick branches of a great oak, his head got caught and he was stuck dangling in the air.

David's chief commander, Joab, ignored David's command and he plunged three daggers into Absalom's heart and then ten of Joab's young armor bearers surrounded Absalom and killed him. Sounds a bit like the way Judas died; hanging from a tree. They threw Absalom's body into a deep pit and piled a great heap of stones over it and the army of Israel fled back to their homes.

When the messengers came to report to David on the war and the victory, all he wanted to know was what happened to his son. David was overcome with emotion when he heard that Absalom was dead. He went up to his room and burst into tears. And as he went, he cried, “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I could have died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son (**2 Samuel 18:33**).

David finally understands, in the depth of his being, compassion and unfailing love. He now knew pity and mercy in the face of the most heinous of sins; he owned it; it became part of his own character and nature. David even hurt for the one who hurt and betrayed him—the one who wanted him dead. David had passed his internship as his actions give us a clear picture of the Messiah.

When David made his way back to Jerusalem everyone came to greet him even Shimei; yes the one who threw stones at him and cursed him. Shimei fell down before David and repented. Of course David's men wanted to kill him, but David had pity, mercy and compassion even on this descendent of Saul.

David said, "This is not a day for execution but for celebration! I am once again the king of Israel!" Then turning to Shimei, David vowed, "Your life will be spared" (**2 Samuel 19:22-23**). Then we see David just doling out mercy and compassion on everyone: Mephibosheth (another descendent of Saul), Barzillai, his concubines, and the Gibeonites. You see David had finally learned that it was not all about sin; rather, it was all about the amazing mercy of God.

Again, this is a picture of Christ's resurrection. Jesus was rejected, mocked, humiliated, run out of town and killed; but He rose again and now it is a day for celebration and not execution. Judgment will come in time, but for now it is a day of grace. Yes, judgment will most certainly come for the enemies of Christ; but for now all of us get to live under this huge banner of mercy, pity, unfailing love and great compassion. Praise Jesus!

So when you find yourself wondering what God is doing in your life, I want you to reflect back on these stories. Perhaps God has you enrolled in Pain Central to tear you apart from your flesh; to teach you to not rely on your *Old Sinful Nature* and not walk in the ways of men, the ways of kings. Or maybe you are enrolled in Conformation University where God is instilling in you aspects of His character and nature that currently are missing but which are absolutely necessary for you to accurately represent Him?

I want you to think about the ways in which your life does or does not reflect the kingdom of the Messiah. If you do this will help you understand what He is doing with your life and why He is taking you through the things He is taking you through. It will help you understand why it is necessary.

And when you get an accurate vision regarding what God is doing with your life it will help you relent and stop the fighting and struggling so He can transform you into the image of Jesus Christ and like David you will be a living, breathing example of the Messiah.

I encourage you; let these truths transform your attitude from sorrow and dismay to one of expectation and hope, for you know that down the road lies the time of glory and grace. The journey may be difficult; but, if you are willing, God will complete His work in you and you will be like Him. After all, that is the goal of true Christianity—Christ in you, the hope of glory (***Colossians 1:27***).

Let's Pray