

### Tragedy in David's Family

2 Samuel 13:1-39 (key verse 36b)

*"The king, too, and all his attendants wept very bitterly."*

The feelings between a man and woman can be one of the most powerful things in this world. More powerful than the atomic bomb. I believe they are at the heart of the gender based violence in our country. Men and women do horrible things to one another because of deep feelings or emotions they have against each other. Similarly, men and woman would idolise each other based on strong emotions or feelings they have for each other. In today's passage a man violates a young beautiful woman because of strong feelings he has for her. He destroys her life all because of these emotions and feelings. The whole passage then becomes a reaction of emotions and hateful feelings. How do we deal with our strong emotions and feelings about something or someone? Are we ruled by emotions and feelings? Or do we place them to the test before the word of God? May the Lord help us learn truths from this message that can help us better deal with emotions and feelings in our lives. May God help us be people who bring peace and are a source of blessing to our brothers and sisters, families and friends. Amen.

Look at verse 1-2, "In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. 2Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her." Amnon was so in love with Tamar that the bible says, he was so obsessed with her that he even became ill. It was as though Amnon could not see life without Tamar. His feelings for Tamar were unshakable. Amnon wanted Tamar so badly that he became ill. One big problem was that Tamar was his half sister and it was forbidden for him to marry her. However, Amnon had a cousin named Jonadab who realized that Amnon did not look well every morning, that something was weighing on him heavily [3]. Upon hearing Amnon's situation, he devised a plan for Amnon on how he could get Tamar closer to him [4]. Look at verse 5, "Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'" Amnon loved Jonadab's idea and it seemed great, so he laid down and pretended to be ill [6-8]. However, in verse 9, we read that when Tamar served him the bread Amnon refused to eat, moreover Amnon actually instructed everyone to go out, and then requested Tamar to bring the food to his bedroom, so he may eat from her hand [10].

Look at verse 11-12, "But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, **"Come to bed with me, my sister. 12" "No, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing."** Tamar tried to reason with Amnon not to do such a thing, for it was a wicked thing that should not be done, it was not only wicked but a crime, a violation of someone else's rights or being. Tamar also tried to reason regarding where it would leave the both of them, Look at verse 13, "What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you." Tamar even tried to reason with Amnon to at least speak to the king who could perhaps make an exception and allow Amnon to marry Tamar. Look at verse 14, "But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her." Amnon took a foolish decision to not listen to Tamar, but rather follow his foolish feelings and emotions. His mind-set was all controlled by his sexual urges, he lost his God given brains and started to think through his manhood. It did not matter how much effort Tamar put in trying to reason with Amnon. How could Amnon be trapped to serve his feelings? It is because, Amnon had many days contemplating and feeding on his feelings and emotions for Tamar. He had been daydreaming about Tamar for this very day. He had idolized his feelings and emotions for Tamar. So no matter how much Tamar tried to reason with Amnon, he became stone cold, only one thing was reasonable to Amnon and it was to rape Tamar and satisfy his sexual urges.

Let us now see what happened after Amnon raped Tamar, look at verse 15-17, "Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out! 16" "No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me." But he refused to listen to her. 17He called his personal servant and said, "Get this woman out of my sight and bolt the door after her." the strong attraction feelings and emotions Amnon had for Tamar had convinced him that to act upon those feelings would bring him happiness and joy. However after he relieved himself of his feelings and emotions, he realized it was all a lie. He felt deceived by his own

feelings and emotions as though it was Tamar who had deceived him. And so after he raped Tamar, he hated her with so much intensity, more than the attraction feelings he had for her. He felt so foolish and so deceived that he even commanded Tamar to get out. Instead of Tamar being the one to be filled with hatred for Amnon, it's actually Amnon who is filled with intense hatred. Satan had enticed him into following his feelings and once he acted on them, the feelings died and he was left with guilt. This is the result of entertaining feelings and emotions without testing them through the word of God. Amnon did not present his feelings before God through prayer. In fact the word of God was clear, for it was forbidden for him to marry Tamar. He knew the truth and yet he continued to entertain his feelings for Tamar. His feelings and emotions for Tamar were indeed wicked. It is said that before a person can rape, it would have been after over some periods of them looking at the person they want to rape, pre-meditating over what they want to do. In this way they continually feed their wicked feelings and emotions until they finally act on those feelings. This means that even before they commit the wicked act, their very feelings were wicked. The main source or cause of the wicked action was born from the feelings and the emotions.

Feelings and emotions are the most powerful force especially those between a man and woman. One area where they can deceive is when one makes a marriage decision. Young men and women enter into marriage under a great deception of these feelings and emotions. Whereas the great pillar and foundation of marriage is God and not feelings or emotions even though, finding a partner may not be void of feelings or emotions. However, God must be at the top and not the feelings or emotions. Amnon thought his strong feelings for Tamar were love, but were simply lust. If I cannot subject my feelings and emotions before the word of God. And such feelings triumph over the word of God, then such feelings or emotions should be rejected. They should be challenged and not be entertained. **Because they are wicked!** If we struggle with them, we should seek help from God fearing people not people like Jonadab. The second area where feelings greatly deceive, is unfaithfulness. A number of broken marriages is because either a married man or woman would have strong feelings for someone else. We sometimes cannot control how we come to feel for certain people, however it is our responsibility through the word of God to test whether my feelings or emotions are pleasing to God or not. The third area which we shall see later in the passage is the strong feelings of revenge or hate. They are powerful and feeding them will result in us serving them and living after our feelings and emotions. We are people of God who should live by faith. If the feelings are wicked, we should stop to entertain them immediately, we should challenge them with the word of God. Otherwise, they can only lead us to shame, bitterness and deep hatred like Amnon. That is why I do not agree when it is usually said, **follow your heart**, well Amnon followed his heart. The word of God teaches us in Jeremiah 17: 9, **"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"** I really pray that we come to God through prayer when we are impressed with strong feelings or emotions over anything in our lives. May the Lord grant us the courage to share with our God-fearing brothers and sisters to help challenge such feelings and emotions, so that we do not find ourselves entertaining them and feeding them.

Inverse 19 we read that there was nothing that Tamar could do but put ashes over her head, placed her hands over her head and to go away weeping. Absalom came to know about the situation and she lived at Absalom's house a desolate woman [20]. And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, but hated Amnon because he had disgraced her sister Tamar [22]. Look at verse 21, "When King David heard all this, he was furious." David became furious but did nothing. His daughter was violated and a clear punishment for his son Amnon was death. However, all he expressed was emotions of fury. Indeed David was conflicted, because Tamar was raped by his own first-born son. Already he lost a son from the previous passage. Also, David probably saw himself through his son Amnon, for he had done a similar thing to Bathsheba. All these factors cluttered David with conflicting emotions and he became paralyzed to make a judgement. However, David could have enquired of the Lord since his emotions were too heavy for him. But David chose to surrender to his emotions and continue living as though nothing happened. Instead of prayerfully dealing with what happened.

Look at verse 23-24, "Two years later, when Absalom's shepherders were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king's sons to come there. 24 Absalom went to the king and said, "Your servant has had shepherders come. Will the king and his attendants please join me?" This was a traditional function, that would end with drinking of wine and celebration. David felt he would be a burden and declined to join them. Look at verse 26, "Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us." Absalom was able to convince the king to send Amnon and the rest of the king's sons to Baal Hazor [27]. All this was Absalom's tactic to have Amnon join them at the shepherders. Look at verse

28, "Absalom ordered his men, "Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, 'Strike Amnon down,' then kill him. Don't be afraid. Haven't I given you this order? Be strong and brave." Absalom killed his brother Amnon over what he had done to Tamar. He had held his anger over a period of 2 years and then finally did what his strong emotions wanted him to do. Had David taken a firm decision or judgement this might have been avoided. Still Absalom had an opportunity to consult with God, to seek council from God to instead challenge his wicked emotions instead of feeding his wicked emotions for those past 2 years. To avenge and murder someone was against God's word.

Nothing justifies revenge for a believer no matter how strong those feelings and emotions may be. Continuing to feed those wicked feelings is to idolize them, they then start to own you such that you lose your reasoning and start to serve those feelings and emotions. That is how Amnon ended up raping Tamar, how David failed to act and bring judgement to Amnon and now Absalom killing Amnon his own brother. May the Lord indeed help us refuse to entertain wicked emotions and feelings. If our feelings and emotions are not in line with the word of God, we should immediately challenge them instead of continue to serve them with what they want. It is not easy because such feelings or emotions are very strong and real. However, we should learn from Jesus who expressed strong emotions and feelings not to take die on the cross in Luke 22:42, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." however instead decided to challenge his wicked emotions through prayer. He then received strength to take a decision, not my will but your will be done. We need Jesus to overcome the wickedness of our feelings and emotions. Through Jesus we can overcome ourselves, we can overcome our deepest desires that are not in agreement with the word of God.

King David was informed of Amnon's death, that it was Absalom who killed him because Amnon had raped Tamar [30-33]. So Absalom fled and left the area to Talmi son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur [37]. Look at verse 36, "As he finished speaking, the king's sons came in, wailing loudly. The king, too, and all his attendants wept very bitterly." Acting on emotions and feelings that go against the word of God can only result in wailing and weeping in the end. We end up living with deep emotions of regrets, guilt and remorse. May our Lord king Jesus save us from this kind of error in our lives. May we never doubt the word of God when we are shown how misguided our emotions or feelings may be. But rather surrender our feelings and emotions to God. May we too come to God in prayer, "not my will but your will be done." Since Jesus overcame we too can overcome by faith. Through Jesus and the power of the cross we have been granted the power to challenge wicked emotions and feelings and to make such feelings null or ineffective.

In conclusion, a great tragedy occurred over David's family. Rape from your own brother, then murder of a brother from another brother. The whole thing just looked horrible and messy. All because firstly, Amnon relied on his feelings instead of trusting in God. He destroyed the life of a young beautiful woman and brought shame to himself and his family. Secondly, because David instead of consulting with God is paralyzed by his own emotions. Thirdly, Absalom entertained his feelings of anger and revenge towards Amnon for over 2 years. We saw no one consulting with God in this passage, but rather consulting or entertaining wicked emotions and feelings. The end was tragedy, emotions and feelings of shame, regret, and remorse. Through this passage we actually see that, fighting wicked emotions with logic and reason is of no effect. Tamar tried and she failed dismally. Only Jesus has the proven power to have overcome wickedness. I pray that we may run to Jesus who is our saviour, no wicked emotions and feelings are greater than Jesus. Jesus overcame so that me and you may overcome. May we be a source of blessing and not a source of shame, remorse and weeping in our families, among our brothers and sisters and friends, so help us O LORD. Amen.