

## GOD DEvised THE PERFECT WAY

2 Samuel 14:1-33 (Key verse 14)

*“Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But that is not what God desires; rather, he devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him.*

In last week’s passage, we saw how David’s eldest son, Amnon, raped Absalom’s sister, Tamar. Our hearts cringed when Amnon shamelessly sent Tamar away and bolted the door behind her. But Amnon’s behaviour was not the most disturbing part of last week’s message. David’s behaviour was. When David heard what had happened, he was furious. (13: 21) Yet, he did not rebuke or punish his son.....In fact, he just ignored Amnon and carried on with life as if nothing happened!

But Tamar's brother Absalom, could not just ignore what Amnon did. Though for two years, he did not say a word to Amnon, either good or bad, Absalom hated Amnon for disgracing his sister and plotted how he would take vengeance on his brother. One day when Amnon was drunk, Absalom ordered his men to strike and kill him. Then Absalom fled to Geshur where he hid from his father.....and lived as a **banished person** ..... for murdering his brother Amnon.

For three whole years, David did nothing to bring back his banished son, Absalom. Some might suggest we shouldn’t blame David for this. Perhaps he was still processing the death of Amnon, and therefore was unable to bring Absalom back. But this was not the case. Because after mourning many days for Amnon (13:37), David was consoled concerning Amnon’s death, and longed to go to Absalom. (13:39) Nevertheless.....surprisingly.....David did nothing to bring Absalom back.....and simply left him as a banished person in Geshur.

Many times in previous studies, we learned through David about God and His character. However, today’s passage, is different. In today’s passage we will learn that unlike David, God actively devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him. I sincerely pray, that today’s passage move our hearts so we can all come out of banishment and confidently return to God, as our loving and heavenly father. Amen!

Let’s look at verse 1. (Read) It had already been three years after Absalom struck and killed his brother Amnon. As the commander and chief of David’s army, Joab worked closely with David. So he saw how much the king’s heart longed for Absalom. Yet, despite his longing, David did absolutely nothing to bring back his banished son. Then one day, Joab decided to help David take action. Look at verses 2-3. Joab sent someone to Tekoa and had a wise woman brought from there. He said to her, “Pretend you are in mourning..... Dress in mourning clothes, and don’t use any cosmetic lotions..... Act like a woman who has spent many days grieving for the dead. Then go to the king and speak these words to him.” And Joab put the words in her mouth. Let’s listen to what the wise woman told David. Can (name) please read verses 4-7 for us.....but you have to sound like a crying and mourning widow!! (Read) .....What a great acting performance by the wise woman from Tekoa; right!! She sounded so convincing!! And what a heart moving story Joab gave her to tell David... A helpless widow pleading for the life of her only remaining son. Not even the best Korean drama (Korean Dramas are very emotional) can pull at the strings of a man’s heart like this story!!

Then how did David respond? Look at verse 8. The king said to the woman, “Go home, and I will issue an order in your behalf.” Wow!! As expected, David was really moved by the woman’s story. In those days, according to Mosaic Law murderers had to be executed by the so called – avengers of blood. (Num 35:30) Yet, David confidently said (look at verse 10) “If anyone says anything to you, bring them to me, and they will not bother you again.” David’s heart was really touched by the woman’s plea to save her son. So much so that he invoked the name of the Lord saying, (look at verse 11) “As surely as the Lord lives.....not one hair of your son’s head will fall to the ground.” This was exactly what Joab and the wise woman wanted to hear!! Look at verse 13b. Then the woman said: When the king says this, does he not convict himself, for the king has not brought back his banished son? This was all along what Joab wanted David to do. To bring back his banished son. Indeed, whether it was the widow’s son or David’s own son, God’s heart equally longed for both of them to recover and be restored to him.

Look at verse 14. Can we please read today's key verse together? Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But that is not what God desires; rather, he devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him. Indeed, like the widow's son and Absalom, we all commit terrible sins before God. Consequently, like both the widow's son and Absalom, we are naturally banished from God's presence.....and deserving of death.

The question is, what will happen if God leaves us in this banished state? Look again at the key verse. Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die and forever be lost to God in eternal hell!! But that is not what God desires. (14b) Although God has every right and authority to banish us from His presence forever, His desire is for each and every person to return to Him.....to be saved....and live with Him forever in His kingdom. That is why **he devises ways** so that a banished person does not remain banished from him. When someone devises something – he is carefully thinking ..... planning.....and finding a solution to a problem. That is exactly what God is doing. God devises ways.....he is carefully thinking ..... planning.....and finding ways to bring us back to Him.

And in His great wisdom and power, God devised the perfect way for Him to bring us back to Him. That Way is..... Jesus Christ. (John 14:6) As we all know, the wages of Amon's sin.....Absalom's sin.....your sin and my sin.....is eternal death and banishment from God! Therefore, in His righteousness God cannot simply bring us back to Himself.....without first punishing our sin. But as we have said.....if God punishes us for our sin, we are forever lost to him. But it is exactly here that God found the perfect solution for our sin and devised the perfect plan to call us out of banishment. He took all our dirty and shameful sins.....and placed it on His one and only son Jesus. Then, instead of punishing you and me, God punished Jesus in our place..... by putting Him to death on the cross. Now whoever repents of their sin and believe that Jesus died in his or her place.....no longer have to live as a banished person but can confidently return to God (Rom 3:9-31)

Praise be to God who is not like David who simply left Absalom in banishment! But devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him. Thank and praise God for devising the perfect way for us to confidently return to Him by faith in Jesus Christ. For surely.....most certainly.....God deeply loves sinners like Absalom.....and sinners like you and me!!

How did David respond? Look at verse 21. (Read) David's heart was moved by the love and character of God. So finally, after three years of leaving Absalom in banishment, David gave the order to bring back the young man Absalom. Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. (23) But then when Absalom arrived in Jerusalem, David did something unexpectedly. Look at verse 24. But the king said, "[Absalom] must go to his own house; he must not see [his] face." So Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king. This is quite strange, right?! We know that even before the wise woman spoke to David, he longed to see Absalom. Then, moved by God's love and character, David agreed to call Absalom back.....and was surely willing to embrace his son. But when the moment arrived, David simply could not reconcile or even see **Absalom**. We wonder: But why not!?!? Let's look at the rest of the passage to find the answer.

Look at verses 25-26. (Read) So is it a sin to be exceptionally handsome or beautiful? Not at all. The problem with Absalom was that when he was highly praised for his handsome appearance, he lived to please people instead of God. Consequently, Absalom never repented for killing his brother Absalom.

Look at verses 28-32. Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face. Then he thought he had waited long enough to see David and be restored to his princely position. So Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come to him. So he sent a second time, but he refused to come. Then he said to his servants, "Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Can you imagine Absalom's arrogance and insolence in doing this? Then Joab did go to Absalom's house, and he said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" Absalom said to Joab, "Look, I sent word to you and said, 'Come here so I can send you to the king to ask, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would

be better for me if I were still there!" Now then, I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death."

Here we can see that Absalom's heart indeed remained unchanged before God and his father David. Considering what sin Absalom committed, would it really have been better for him to have remained in Geshur? Not at all.....Moreover, was he really in a position to demand to see the king's face at a time where his life was spared after murdering his brother? Absolutely not. Yet, with an unrepentant heart, Absalom said: I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death." Wow!! Absalom's pride knew no bounds. His arrogance was out of this world. Should David have taken Absalom up on his word, he most certainly had every right to put Absalom to death. But instead, when Joab went to the king and told him this, the king summoned Absalom and kissed him. (33) But this by no means meant, and as we will see in the next chapter, that David and Absalom reconciled. The truth was, their relationship remained broken..... and a form of banishment still existed.

Can you see how important repentance is. It was one thing for David to allow Absalom to return to Jerusalem. But it was quite another for Absalom to humbly and repentantly respond to David's invitation by sincerely asking God and David to forgive him for murdering his brother Amnon. Likewise, it is one thing to praise and thank God for devising the perfect way for banished sinners..... to return to Him.....yet it is quite another matter how we respond to God's wonderful love and grace. The two go hand in hand!!

**In conclusion.** You and I are sinners and by default **banished** from God. And unless God devised a way, our lives are destined to forever be lost to God as eternal hell awaits us. But that is not what God **desires.** God loves us so much that he **devised** the perfect solution for our sin problem...the perfect way to bring us back to himself. He gave us His one and only Son. He nailed all our dirty and ugly sins on Jesus and the cross, and killed Jesus in our place as punishment for our sins. Now whoever believes in Jesus no longer have to be banished from God. But can by faith, in Jesus blood, return confidently to God and be reconciled. But for this to happen.....we must not follow in Absalom's footsteps. Instead, we must repent of the sins we commit and sincerely ask God to forgive us. Many believers accept Jesus and His cross as part of God's way to bring for a banished person to not remain banished from Him. But what they fail to remember is that repentance is equally part of God's way ...just as Jesus is. The two goes hand in hand. This morning, let's fully accept the way God devised for us to return to Him. Let's newly accept Jesus Christ as God's way to solve our sin problem. And at the same time, lets deeply and sincerely repent of our sin. Amen!