

IF I FIND FAVOR IN THE EYES OF THE LORD

2 Samuel 15:1-37 (Key verse 25-26)

"Then the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the Lord's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him."

In today's passage we are going to learn from David how to respond when our God given mission is interrupted, when our life purpose is interrupted, what to do when we are in the midst of a life crisis. In today's passage we will encounter David who finds himself in a crisis. David was in a crisis when his position as a king for the people of Israel was threatened by his Son Absalom who stole the hearts of the people of Israel. to overthrow David. When David was faced with this crisis, he did not fight Absalom, instead he fled Jerusalem and said in the key verse: *"If I find favor in the Lord's eyes, he will bring me back to Jerusalem and let me see the ark and his dwelling place again."* We are therefore going to learn why David responded in this way, and what it means to find favor in the Lord's eyes. I pray that God may have mercy on us all, to receive one word from God on what attitude we should have when we are faced with a life crisis.

The passage today begins by introducing us to Absalom who in the course of time provided himself a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. Absalom did all this to start a campaign to steal his father's throne as king for the people of Israel. Absalom positioned himself for the throne by getting up early and going to the city gate with his fifty men, chariot, and horses to listen to complaints from the tribes of Israel. To win the people's hearts, Absalom would say to all the people who brought their complaints: *"Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you."* Regardless of the claim, Absalom would agree with the people that their claim was valid. Furthermore, Absalom stirred up dissatisfaction of the people towards David, saying: *"but there is no representative of the king to hear you. If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice."* Absalom positioned himself as a better leader than his father David. To win the people's hearts he told them what their ears are itching to hear, he agreed with them. Furthermore in **verse 5-6** it says: *"Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. / Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel."*

When Absalom had won the people of Israel's hearts he went further and started a conspiracy in the land, he first tricked his father saying: *"Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the Lord. /While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: 'If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron.'"* When his father gave him the go-ahead he invited 200 men of Israel to come with him as guests who went innocently to accompany him as the king's son who had good intentions to worship God at Hebron. When Absalom got to Hebron he mobilised his conspiracy and sent messengers throughout the tribes of Israel saying to them as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets then say: *"Absalom is king in Hebron"* Absalom also got Ahithophel, David's trusted councillor on his side. This really portrayed Absalom as a legitimate king for the people. Even though he tricked the people of Israel, and used them to get what he wanted, to take down his father. To the people of Israel, Absalom seemed like just the leader the people needed, a fresh start with fresh ideas. He spoke well, he seemed to understand the people better and had all solutions to their problems.

But the honest truth is that Absalom was not a good leader for the people of Israel, what the people of Israel needed was a Shepherd who cares for their needs, who is able to grant them hope in the Lord, who will lead them to fully depend on God. Absalom on the other hand did not care for the people, all he cared about was occupying his father's throne. In this world there are many things that give us false promises like Absalom. As children of God we must be careful not to set our hearts and hopes on them, but rather we should set our hope and hearts on the promises of God. God gave David to the people of Israel, through him God promised to deliver them, lead them and to shepherd them as a people of God. But because they were far from God and set their hearts on the empty promises that Absalom gave them, they set the terrible conspiracy of Absalom in motion.

After Absalom's secret messengers had spread the word that Absalom is king in Hebron, word came out and messengers went and told David about it, that the hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom. How did David respond to this

news? Did he mobilise his men to go and silence Absalom once and for all? As we know David was a great warrior, surely he had many loyal men of the army who could do something to help him retain his throne. Let us look at **verse 14** to see how David responded: *“Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, “Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin on us and put the city to the sword.””*

Surprisingly David did not fight, he did not try to silence Absalom, but decided to flee from Jerusalem. Why? David decided to flee from Jerusalem firstly because Absalom will want to start a war, and so to protect the people of Israel and the city from ruin, David decided to flee rather than stay. Unlike Absalom who was concerned about himself and used the people of Israel to get what he wants, David was rather concerned about the people of Israel, he was concerned about their well-being. David was indeed a true Shepherd for the people of Israel. David’s Shepherd heart is even further revealed, through how he treated foreigners. In **verse 18-20** it says: *“All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king. The king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland. / You came only yesterday. And today shall I make you wander about with us, when I do not know where I am going? Go back, and take your people with you. May the Lord show you kindness and faithfulness.”* Ittai and his people would be very useful assets for David as he flees from Absalom in the wilderness, they would be useful resources to protect and fight for David against Absalom if he were to come after him. However, here we see David who is concerned about Ittai and his people, he encouraged him to stay in Jerusalem and blessed him saying: *“May the Lord show you kindness and faithfulness.”*

David did all this while in the midst of a crisis, what was happening to him was physically exhausting that he now has to be on the run, it must have affected him spiritually as well. He must have thought about many things, such as failing to manage his household in a godly fashion, spoiling his children and looking the other way when Amnon raped his sister Tamar, and the murder of Amnon by Absalom. However even though David was in this very dark place, we see him amazingly caring and concerned about the wellbeing of the people of Israel, and caring for the foreigners. Indeed David was a true Shepherd for the people of Israel, laying down his life for them, just as Jesus laid down his life for us on the cross. Moved by David’s compassion and love, Ittai the foreigner replied to David in **verse 21**: *“But Ittai replied to the king, “As surely as the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be.”* And so Ittai and his people marched and followed David as he fled from Jerusalem.

But now how could David have such an attitude towards the people of Israel, how could he still have such a shepherd heart when he was in the middle of such a crisis, he lost his throne, he was spiritually not doing well, but yet we see him filled with great concern for the people of Israel. To understand David’s attitude, let us look at how he responded to Zadok and all the other Levites who were with him carrying the Ark of the Covenant of God, after they had offered sacrifices and all the people had left the City. Let us look at **verse 25-26**: *“Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the Lord’s eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. 26 But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.”* David’s attitude was amazing because he had surrendered everything to the Lord, he put God as the center and humbly brought everything to him. Without putting God on the center David would have probably tried to fight Absalom, he probably would have thought what can I do to protect myself. But when put all things to God saying: *“If I find favor in the Lord’s eyes”* he could have a different attitude, he could remember what God had called him for into this world, to care for the people of Israel. When we do not put God in the center and surrender everything to him, we cannot fulfill the purpose of God, we cannot overcome and handle ourselves when we are in a crisis, rather we will lead ourselves into further destruction. When David put faith in God, and relied on God’s favor he could protect the people of Israel and save them from bloodshed.

Furthermore, David said: *“But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.”* Here we see David bringing his mistakes to God, and surrendering only to God to do what seems good to him. Although David was concerned about the people of Israel and wanted to serve them and take care of them, he did not set his life to please them. Pleasing the people would mean he could have tried to fight Absalom, or do something to win back their hearts, by explaining to them that Absalom tricked them and the likes. However David did not do that,

rather he was concerned about pleasing God. David was more concerned about God doing what seems good to him. He did this because he believed that God is in control and is the judge not the people. When we focus on pleasing people, over pleasing God, we cannot be used fully by God, we cannot care for campus students like David cared for the people of Israel, we will stumble every time we have a life crisis. I pray that God may help us to put God at the center, depend on his favor when we are in the midst of a crisis, spiritually, work, school and family. I pray that we may focus on pleasing God, rather than pleasing those around us. When David depended on the favor of God, and rested on pleasing God and his goodness, he could take care of the people of Israel. He could pray for the sake of the people of Israel. When David was climbing up the mount of olives weeping, barefoot and with his head covered he prayed for the sake of the people of Israel. In **verse 31** it says: *“Now David had been told, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” So David prayed, “Lord, turn Ahithophel’s counsel into foolishness.”*” David prayed that God may restore him as king for the people of Israel, to take care of them and teach them according to the ways of God.

Conclusion:

I thank God who has called me as a Shepherd for the campus students, for Sh. Jacob and Rebekah who raised as Jesus’ disciple and helped me to discover my life purpose. Serving campus students with Bible study had its challenges, but one thing for sure at the end of it I would be filled with so much encouragement and happiness from hearing the word of God. Back in the days I used to enjoy sharing testimony with the brothers here at the Biblehouse, followed by great fellowship and delicious food that auntie Massie used to prepare for us.

However in the last two years, things started going south in my life, I became busier at work, I started studying for my Masters and I encountered conflicts at work to a point where I even resigned from my job. Getting another job was so hard, but eventually God blessed me with a job at PwC. I thought all my problems were finally over, but things became much worse. It has been so difficult to prepare Bible studies diligently, to prepare testimony and share with brothers because of how busy work is. Last week we had Bible academy, it was so difficult to prepare, that I became so stressed. But I thank God for my wife, Bro Rapelang and Bro Thabo who supported my preparation for the academy. What I am trying to say is, I feel like I am in the middle of a crisis. And what really bothers me is that I feel like I am always having issues with my work and it just drains me and I honestly just do not know what to do, my head is just filled with so many things, doubts, fears, helplessness and emptiness even. When David could not do anything he depended on the Lord and said: *“If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord”* When he said this, God could help him and he could still serve, protect and take care of the people of Israel. I pray that I may depend on God’s favor to intervene in my crisis, and also rest my heart on pleasing God. I pray that I may believe God will intervene