

2 Samuel 19:9-20:26 | “Loyalists & Rebels”  
*Preached on November 13, 2022 by Pastor Matt Brown*

Please turn in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 19, verse 9 this morning. *[pause]*

**In the American Revolution, many people don't realize that not all Americans were in favor of fighting against Britain.**

In fact, they estimate that about 1/5th of Americans were what were called, “Loyalists,” because they were loyal to Britain and the king.<sup>1</sup> *[pause]*

**On the other side, were of course those who were seen as rebels for they were rebelling against Britain and the king.**

The difference that it came down to was were they loyal to the crown or rebelling against it. *[pause]*

**Now our text presents a whole totally different situation with a totally different and way better king, but the same dividing line will be seen in our passage.**

There will be those who are loyal to King David and submit to His kingship, and those who rebel against him.

**And through this story, we will be pushed to see how people also respond to King Jesus in different ways. *[pauseeeee]***

In the chapters last week, we saw how Absalom stirred up a rebellion against David, so much so that David had to flee the capital city.

**The two armies went to battle, and the outcome of that battle was that Absalom was dead, and David's side victorious.**

But now that Absalom was dead, and David was still residing outside of Jerusalem, what's going to happen now?

**The people are trying to decide what to do, just listen in on verses 9 and 10. *[READ 19:9-10]***

The people are like, “David did so much for us in the past, and Absalom is dead, so why don't we just go back to David being king and bring him back?”

**It's an awkward situation because they had in essence rejected David for Absalom, and now that Absalom is dead, they are going back to David.**

But instead of acting quickly, they drag their feet a little bit, and David reaches out to Judah, the tribe of his ancestors. *[pause]*

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/loyalists/>.

David conveys a message to the priests to tell Judah to bring him back since he comes from their tribe.

He even promises Amasa, who was Absalom's commander, the top position of commander of his army, and he sways the hearts of the people to bring him back. *[pause]*

So what the people of Judah do is that they go out to meet him and bring him back to Jerusalem.

You see, to be the ones to go out to meet David and bring him back is seen as an important thing, for it conveys loyalty and that David favors you.

*This is why we find multiple people emphasized for how they come and meet David, and in their coming, we see that...*

### **I. Some bow the knee to the King and receive grace. (19:9-40)**

If you remember, as David was leaving Jerusalem, he met different people on his way out.

Well now on his way in, he meets various people, some of whom he met on his way out. *[pause]*

First, there's Shimei, who is the one who was cursed and threw stones at David and his men.

He's like a dog with his tail between his legs, as he knows that he's a goner unless he goes to greet David.

So he comes with 1,000 other Benjaminites to try to somehow win David over.

Just listen to what he says, starting in verse 19...*[READ 19:19-23]*

Shimei admits his sin, doesn't make any excuses about it, and shows in his actions that he is eager to make things right.

He goes to David in repentance, knowing that his only hope is the mercy of David. *[pause]*

Isn't that such an accurate description of what happens with those who repent and turn to Christ for forgiveness?

We admit the guilt for our sin, as we know that there are no excuses for our sin against God.

In our actions, we show repentance by going to God.

And like Shimei, we go to God in repentance, knowing that our only hope is His mercy. *[pause]*

That's true repentance.

True repentance is someone who genuinely admits that they did wrong and are guilty before God, and they simply cling to the mercy of God.

Like Shimei, our only hope is the mercy and grace of the King! *[pauseeee]*

Isn't this a spectacular prefiguring of the Gospel?

Like Shimei, we can go from cursing Christ to repenting before Him and find full and free forgiveness!

And though David eventually has Shimei killed when Solomon takes over,<sup>2</sup> Christ is the better David, who doesn't forgive temporarily, but eternally.

For He paid for our sins on the Cross, opening up the way for our sins to be forgiven forever, when he said, "It is finished."<sup>3</sup> *[pauseee]*

**What grace and mercy of the king!**

Even though David had Abishai chirping in his ear to kill off Shimei, David shows mercy by declaring that Shimei will not die. *[pause]*

You see, at this point, David is not like the world's leaders, for usually those in power in our world don't show grace to those who oppose them. *[pauseeee]*

When Joseph Stalin was in power, there was what was called, "The Great Terror of 1937," or also known as, "The Great Purge."

During this time, Stalin eliminated anyone who was a threat to him.

In two years, many experts believe that at least 750,000 people were killed, but many believe that it's probably twice as high.

**That's not to mention the millions of others who were sent to forced labor camps.<sup>4</sup> *[pause]***

Those in our world in power typically don't show grace to those who oppose them, but David does.

And Christ perfectly does, for even though we sinned against the righteous and holy One, He forgave us who were rebels. *[pauseeee]*

David gave Shimei undeserved life and forgiveness, and that's what we receive in Christ.

We each deserve to die, but if we throw ourselves at the feet of Jesus, repenting of our sins and turning to Him in faith, we receive life and forgiveness.

Truly, for those who humble themselves before Him, He is gracious and kind.

**Have you repented of your sins and turned to Christ to receive forgiveness and eternal life?**  
*[pauseeee]*

---

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Kings 2:8-9.

<sup>3</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.history.com/topics/russia/great-purge>.

Not only does David encounter Shimei, but also Mephibosheth.

If you remember, Mephibosheth is the son of Jonathan, who David took care of by assigning Ziba as his servant.

Then on his way out of Jerusalem, David was told by Ziba that Mephibosheth wasn't coming along because he was taking advantage of the opportunity to get back the kingdom of Saul.<sup>5</sup>

So David rewarded Ziba with all that belonged to Mephibosheth. *[pause]*

Well now what's going to happen with Mephibosheth now that David is back?

What we find is that Ziba's story may not have been true. *[pause]*

Mephibosheth didn't take care of his physical appearance the whole time that David was gone.

So that's one piece of evidence for his story, but then listen to what he says in verse 26. [\[READ 19:26-28\]](#)

He states that he tried to join David, but Ziba prevented him from going since he's lame and couldn't get a donkey for himself.

He claims that Ziba slandered him, and places his future in the hands of David's judgment. *[pause]*

In response, David once again shows kindness to someone who he thought was enemy.

But I think that he doesn't know 100% who to believe here, so what he does is he divides up the land between Mephibosheth and Ziba. *[pauseeee]*

If you think about it: what happens to Mephibosheth reflects *our* past.

Like Mephibosheth, we were doomed to death before Christ, yet now we are seated at the King's table in mercy and love.

We have no rights on our own, yet all we can do is place our futures in His hands. *[pause]*

Like David, but so much greater, Christ extends mercy and justice.

Yet while David made a decision based on not knowing fully what happened, Christ will make all things right based on perfect knowledge. *[pauseeee]*

How does Mephibosheth respond to such kindness?

He says in verse 30, "Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home." *[pause]*

---

<sup>5</sup> See 2 Samuel 9 & 16:1-4.

In gratitude and loyalty, Mephibosheth was more concerned about the king than his possessions.

Are we like that?

In gratitude for Christ's gift of grace, do we care more about Christ and His renown than our possessions?

Are we ready to give it all up as long as Christ is made known? *[pauseeee]*

In our American culture, there's such an emphasis on *stuff*.

We are always looking for the newer and bigger product or possession.

We aren't content with what we have, but the resounding mantra is: "Just one more thing."

So how many of us would say like Mephibosheth, "Let him take it all," in loyalty to the King?  
*[pause]*

Mephibosheth found satisfaction in the king's well-being more than anything else.

May Christ be our all-consuming satisfaction that trumps any little possession we have.

May we be able to say, "As long as I have Christ, I have everything I need." *[pauseeee]*

There's another person who David meets who willingly gave much to the Kingdom: Barzillai.

Barzillai was one of the wealthy men, who gave a bunch of provisions to David right before the battle against Absalom.

And he comes and joins David to go with him over the Jordan River. *[pauseeee]*

David, in gratitude for his kindness, wants to extend kindness in return so he offers Barzillai the chance to come back to Jerusalem with him and David would take care of him.

But Barzillai is 80 years old and he knows that the end of his life is near.

So he just wants to live out the rest of his life and die in his hometown. *[pause]*

Also, being older, he knew he couldn't fully enjoy all of the delicacies of being in the king's court, so he kindly declines the offer.

Instead, he offers his servant, Chimham, to go in his stead, and David accepts this. *[pauseeee]*

As we think about the example of Barzillai - we see an older, wealthy man using his resources for David's kingdom.

And in how he responds to David's offer, we see that he's a content man, who gave with the right motive. *[pause]*

He was so content with what he had that he was able to sacrifice his resources for the kingdom.

He even did this at 80 years old! *[pause]*

When all others were hoarding their money in old age, Barzillai was sacrificing his for the kingdom! *[pause]*

This is such a challenge for each of us.

We should be counter-cultural when it comes to our handling of money.

When others are storing it up for themselves or spending it on flippant things - we utilize our resources for God's kingdom.

We don't hoard them for selfish use, but we steward them for God's use. *[pauseeee]*

And Barzillai shows us that no matter what our age, we should be about the Kingdom of God.

It doesn't matter if you are 60, 70, 80, or 90 here this morning - you can serve God in some way. *[pause]*

Barzillai could have easily thought, "Eh, I'm old, let the young people give their provisions to David."

Or he could have thought, "Let the younger people join David to cross the Jordan, I'm older and no one will expect me to come anyway."

Yet at 80 he's actively helping David out. *[pause]*

As you can see, no matter our age or financial status, we are not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, but treasures in heaven.<sup>6</sup>

And we can do this because we are content with what we have.

We don't do it for the reward, yet God does reward faithfulness,<sup>7</sup> like David tried to do for Barzillai. *[pauseeee]*

Are you content with what God has given you?

Are you willing to sacrifice your resources for God and His purposes?

When you give for His sake, you won't regret it, for he rewards faithfulness. *[pauseeee]*

In most of chapter 19, we saw the truth that there were people who bowed the knee to the king and received grace.

---

<sup>6</sup> A reference to Matthew 6:19-21.

<sup>7</sup> See Matthew 25:23 as one example.

Shimei, Mephibosheth, and Barzillai all submitted to the lordship of David and were blessed with doing so.

And that's what happens when we bow the knee to King Jesus: we receive grace. *[pauseeee]*

When we repent of our sins and trust in Him, we receive forgiveness and eternal life.

As we follow Him loyally and give sacrificially, He blesses our faithfulness.

There is truly grace for those who follow Christ and receive Him.

Have you experienced the grace that comes from submitting to Christ? *[pauseeee]*

*As we move into the end of chapter 19, we see that not all submit to king David, for some rebel, and so we see that...*

## **II. Some rebel against the King and face defeat. (19:41-20:26)**

Have you ever come home thinking that all would be well, only to find chaos? *[pause]*

One time, we were in Lancaster for a while, and then we came back home.

And you know how after a long time away, it's later in the day, and you just want to get home and rest?

You know how you are thinking that all will be well and orderly at home?

Well that's not what we came home to. *[pause]*

Instead, we came home to a mess.

A mouse had made its way into the house while we were gone, and let's just say, there was evidence of the presence of a mouse all over the kitchen.

So instead of coming home to a clean house and then going to bed - we came home to a house that was a mess, and we needed to clean it. *[pause]*

That's a little like David's return to Jerusalem.

He's coming home, but not all is well when he returns. *[pauseeee]*

At the end of chapter 19, we see a simmering tension going on.

Look at verse 41... "Then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?" *[pause]*

The men of Israel are mad because they were the first ones to have the idea of bringing David back, yet the tribe of Judah went before them and brought David back first.

By this act, Israel saw this as the tribe of Judah getting a “one-up” on the rest of the nation, and this made them mad as they wanted David’s favor.

So Judah and the rest of Israel argue over this, and one man named Sheba takes advantage of this tense situation to rebel against David.

Turn over to chapter 20, verses 1 and 2...[\[READ 20:1-2\]](#)

Uh oh, not good.

David’s return to Jerusalem wasn’t all rainbows and butterflies, but the kingdom is temporarily divided. *[pauseeee]*

What we see with Sheba is that he was an opportunist, who jumped at the chance to rebel.

And those who seemed like they wanted David around, quickly jumped ship at the opportunity. *[pause]*

This causes us to do a heart-check, are we loyal to Christ or do we willingly jump at the opportunity to rebel against Him?

If there’s no opportunity, some of us are willing to go along with the flow, but when the opportunity is ripe, it makes it easier to rebel. *[pauseeee]*

You know, my guess is that most (if not all) of us don’t outright rebel against Christ, but I wonder if we rebel in small ways against His Word. *[pause]*

We are people with a high view of the authority of the Bible, until it hits up against something that we don’t want to do.

When that happens, watch out, for the rebel within us comes out. *[pause]*

Commentator Dale Ralph Davis said...

“Let a married woman find another man she prefers to her husband, or a husband who has gotten close to another woman at work and wants to ditch his wife, and somehow the authority of the Bible doesn’t matter.

Or someone has been wronged by another. It was too much, the wound too deep, the offense too vicious—the one could never be reconciled to the other, even though the offender is repentant and seeks forgiveness....

There are Shebas in the church; some of them are evangelicals of the stricter sort. They rebel against rightful authority; they are determined to go their own way, to call their own shots; they lift up their hand against the King.”<sup>8</sup> *[pause]*

---

<sup>8</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 250–251.



Do you see any rebelliousness in yourself to the Word of the King, which is the Word of God?

If so, put it to death, and submit once again to Christ the King! *[pauseee]*

So Sheba has led a rebellion against David, but what will David do now?

He returns to Jerusalem, and first takes care of his concubines, who Absalom had defiled.

*[pause]*

Next, David gets Amasa to gather the men for battle, but Amasa doesn't make it back in the time allotted to him.

So David, being the expert in war, knows that time is of the essence and he sends Abishai to take the special forces to go and deal with Sheba. *[pause]*

They go out pursuing Sheba, but Joab is with them, and Joab wants to deal with someone before he goes on. *[pause]*

You see, Joab was the previous commander of the armies, but David essentially demoted him and put Amasa in charge because of what he did to Absalom and how he treated David.

So Joab, being the fierce, violent one, who doesn't tolerate rivals, deals with Amasa.

Just listen to what happens in verse 8 of chapter 20. *[READ 20:8-10]*

Yikes, talk about someone who doesn't tolerate a rival!

Amasa was actually the cousin of Joab, yet Joab strikes him down heartlessly.

And then to show how heartless Joab and his men were, the next section says that Amasa was left in the middle of the road wallowing in his blood. *[pause]*

One of Joab's men tells everyone to follow Joab, but people are shocked by the sight of Amasa's body in the road.

So they just move his body off to the side and cover it up, only because it was an obstacle to people following Joab. *[pauseee]*

Joab pursues Sheba to a town called Abel of Beth-maacah, and they besiege the city.

Then a wise woman of the town gets Joab's attention and wants to talk to him.

Just listen to what she says to him in verse 18...*[READ 20:18-22]*

This wise woman of the city is able to avert destruction of the city by finding out what Joab wanted and delivering Sheba's head to him.

And then the chapter concludes with a list of David's top officers. *[pauseeeee]*

As we reflect upon what we learned, we see people rebelling against the king and facing defeat. *[pause]*

Sheba rebels and gets others to follow him, for he doesn't want to be under David's kingship.

Instead of receiving and submitting to the king, he tries to seize power for himself. *[pause]*

This is really what it looks like to be in rebellion to Christ.

Instead of bowing the knee to Him, people want their own way. *[pause]*

The Bible tells them that they are sinners, and people say, "I'm not that bad."

It tells them that they need Christ to be saved, and they say, "No, I can save myself." *[pause]*

Like Sheba did with David - so when people hear of Christ, they blow the trumpet of their soul, declaring, "I have no portion in Christ," and withdraw away.

But in the end, they will have no place of refuge, for they will face judgment. *[pause]*

Christ will come again and judge the living and the dead.<sup>9</sup>

For those who trust in Him, they will receive eternal life, but for those who do not, they will receive eternal punishment.<sup>10</sup>

Those who reject Christ's words will be judged by those words.<sup>11</sup> *[pause]*

As Sheba faced the consequences of his rebellion against king David, so those who reject King Jesus will face the consequences of rejecting the true King. *[pauseeee]*

In showing us what happened to David, these chapters point to how people respond to the better David, King Jesus.

*We see that...*

**There are mixed responses to King Jesus, but His Kingdom will prevail.**

Some people gladly bow the knee to Jesus, recognizing their sinfulness and need for forgiveness.

They are the ones who know they are guilty, and know they have a King who is merciful.

They are the ones who receive grace, even though they were prior enemies, for Christ is ever-gracious and ever-kind. *[pause]*

Others rebel because they don't want to submit under His Lordship, but want their own way.

---

<sup>9</sup> See 1 Peter 4:5.

<sup>10</sup> See Matthew 25:46.

<sup>11</sup> See John 12:48.

They don't admit their guilt, but withdraw away in an attempt to seize control.

They don't think that the King is one to be followed, but avoided.

They are the ones who could have received grace from the King, even though they were enemies, yet they chose to rebel and face judgment. *[pauseeee]*

What's *your* response to Jesus?

He is truly the Messiah, the King, the Savior.

Either you bow the knee to Jesus now and receive grace, or later you will be forced to.<sup>12</sup>

So today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart,<sup>13</sup> for His kingdom will prevail, and He will reign over all. *[pauseeee]*

Jesus, the Son of God, and true King came to this sin-cursed world, and died in our place, taking our sins upon Himself.

He died for those who sinned against Him, so that we as enemies could be called not only friends, but children!

And he rose again, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, awaiting the time of His return. *[pause]*

What a King that we serve!

May we follow Him always, may we submit to His Word completely, and may we proclaim His name to the nations boldly.

---

<sup>12</sup> See Philippians 2:10.

<sup>13</sup> Hebrews 3:7-8.