

Faithful Men In Times of Trouble

Absalom had just staged a major coup against David. He had orchestrated it over a long period of time. He had manipulated people, and, slowly and systematically, won the hearts of David's followers. With enough criticism and enough subtle "what-if's," suddenly Absalom had won the hearts of a huge number of David's people. Rather than fight against his own son and his own people that he loved, David chose to leave town. His head was covered in mourning, and the loyal people by his side were also grief-stricken.

Many moments were crucial during the next few days, but two apply to my thoughts right now. First, Saul's servant Ziba had left Mephibosheth and ran after David with animals, food, and provisions. When David asked where Mephibosheth was, Ziba slandered Mephibosheth and accused him of wanting to take over the kingdom that had belonged to his grandfather Saul. David responded to Ziba that all the possessions he had given to Mephibosheth had been given in memory of David's loving friend Jonathan. All of those lands and wealth now were to be transferred to Ziba instead.

2 Samuel 16:4 "Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king."

This decision was tragic because Mephibosheth, crippled and unable to travel alone, had been left in his home; none of the things Ziba said were true. Mephibosheth's heart was broken over David's great loss; and if there was a loyal man in David's kingdom, it was Mephibosheth.

In a time of mourning and sorrow, it is easy to make quick judgments on information presented to us. All of us need to be very guarded that we do not respond suddenly to any information put before us. Great injustice could be done to very good people if we are not guarded in difficult days.

A broken heart is ill-equipped to make major decisions.

Almost any decision can be put off for a few hours or a few days, and often, the decision can even wait for weeks; waiting is much better than making a tragically wrong decision.

The next difficult situation came when Shimei, a relative of King Saul, followed David's caravan of people out of town. From a small hillside, Shimei was throwing rocks and dirt, cursing David as he left town. Abishai, one of the dearest friends King David had, asked permission to take off Shimei's head. Obviously, in that culture, David had absolute authority, and that would not have violated his rights as a king or the basic principles of his society. Cursing the king was a death sentence; but in his hour of suffering, David made a very wise decision and said that he would be willing to take a cursing as if it were from God. He said if God wanted him to be cursed, then he would trust that God would reward him in His own good time.

II Samuel 16:12 "It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day."

Even in our hour of suffering, we need to remember there is a just God Who watches over the affairs of men. Our ill-treatment or injustice does not separate us from a sovereign God with eternal wisdom. Although we hurt, we can still trust. Trusting while we are hurting is not as easy as trusting when life is good, but it is equally as profitable.