



## **Studies in the Life of David**

Text

Second Samuel 14:1-24

Topic

Joab devises a plan to have Absalom return from banishment for having killed his brother

Title

*"Ban of Brother"*

### Introduction

Caregivers are told to always assume a person in coma can hear you.

I'd had no real experience with comatose individuals until one day about twenty years ago when I was called to the hospital to visit a patient who was in a coma and not expected to regain consciousness. He was the unsaved husband of a dear sister here at Calvary Hanford.

I don't think I really believed he could hear me but I presented the gospel and told him to ask the Lord to save him before he died. There was no response, no squeezing of the hand or blinking of the eyes.

**He recovered!** (Which led me to think that I should have prayed for his healing!). After he recovered he told me he **had** heard me and that he **did** receive the Lord! He lived quite a few years longer but has since gone home to Heaven.

For me it became an example of the extraordinary means God can use in order to save those who are perishing.

In our text this morning there is a verse that has brought a great deal of comfort to many troubled hearts who have lost loved ones whom they are not really sure if they were saved. The verse does not promise they were saved but it establishes the great lengths God has gone and will go to save them.

It's verse fourteen where you read, "for we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him."

The words portray God taking the initiative, reaching out to save all who are banished, wanting to restore them. He has a plan, and devises means to explain that plan, not being willing that any should perish but that all would have the opportunity of eternal life.

Let's explore the heart of God regarding His banished ones. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 God Means To Reach You Who Were Banished And Call You His Sons, and #2 God's Means To Reach You Who Were Banished Cost Him His Son.

#1 God Means To Reach You Who Were Banished  
And Call You His Sons  
(v1-17)

David's son Absalom had planned and executed the murder of his brother, Amnon, and then had fled the country. David loved Absalom and longed for his return. As a father he might be excused for overlooking the murder, but not as the king.

Joab, David's crafty commander-in- chief, decided to help David with his dilemma.

2 Samuel 14:1 So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom.

Joab had David's best interests in mind. He also had the best interests of the nation in mind. Absalom seemed the best candidate to succeed David on the throne. Absalom was very popular with the people and his absence from kingdom life undoubtedly had a demoralizing effect.

In about a chapter, however, Joab is going to regret his decision. Absalom will rebel against David, tearing the kingdom away from him.

It's pretty clear that Joab was not being led by the Lord. Good intentions are no substitute for prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

2 Samuel 14:2 And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. 2 Samuel 14:3 Go to the king and speak to him in this manner." So Joab put the words in her mouth.

Nathan the prophet had earlier come to David with a parable that exposed his sin and led him to repent of his sins of adultery and murder. Joab is mimicking what Nathan did - only they are his words, not the Lord's.

We should not try to duplicate the moving of God's Spirit by the energy of our own flesh. When we do the results are less than spiritual.

2 Samuel 14:4 And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, "Help, O king!"  
2 Samuel 14:5 Then the king said to her, "What troubles you?" And she answered, "Indeed I am a widow, my husband is dead.  
2 Samuel 14:6 Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and there was no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him.  
2 Samuel 14:7 And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.' So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the earth."

You gotta give Joab props for creativity. “Two sons fought” is reminiscent of the fact that for two years there had been bad blood between Absalom and Amnon. “There was no one to part them” was a subtle slam on David whose inaction in dealing with Amnon’s rape of Absalom’s sister, Tamar, certainly contributed to Amnon’s murder.

Now the heir to the throne, Absalom, was in danger of being executed.

2 Samuel 14:8 Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you."

This might be David’s way of saying, “Let me think about it.” He wasn’t ready to render a judgment. The woman pressed upon him.

2 Samuel 14:9 And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord, O king, let the iniquity be on me and on my father's house, and the king and his throne be guiltless."

This is a recognition that what she was asking was outside of God’s law. She was asking David to bend the law in order to save her beloved son and heir.

2 Samuel 14:10 So the king said, "Whoever says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you anymore."

2 Samuel 14:11 Then she said, "Please let the king remember the Lord your God, and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son." And he said, "As the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

She went for the close and got David to commit.

2 Samuel 14:12 Therefore the woman said, "Please, let your maidservant speak another word to my lord the king." And he said, "Say on."

2 Samuel 14:13 So the woman said: "Why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty, in that the king does not bring his banished one home again.

Whoa! This was bold! It’s like calling David a hypocrite because he was willing to do something for her that he wasn’t doing for himself.

Again I'd say it is a little like Nathan saying to David, "You are the man," only it sounds a lot more earthly and fleshly. It was not leading David to repent of anything. In fact, it was asking him to ignore God's law and restore Absalom without dealing with the fact he was a murderer.

2 Samuel 14:14 For we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him.

2 Samuel 14:15 Now therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. And your maidservant said, 'I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant.

2 Samuel 14:16 For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the inheritance of God.'

2 Samuel 14:17 Your maidservant said, 'The word of my lord the king will now be comforting; for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king in discerning good and evil. And may the Lord your God be with you.' "

Did Nathan flatter David after he'd rebuked him? No, he told him some pretty heavy things were on the horizon. This was a grand scheme but it ignored the real problem. How could David both restore and punish his son? How could he show mercy while also executing judgment?

David's dilemma mirrors the dilemma God has with the human race. God made man in His image and put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He shared fellowship with them, walking with them in the afternoon of each day. They had one simple rule: Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God explained that in the day they ate of it they would surely die. They would immediately die spiritually, being separated from fellowship with God. They would begin to die physically. They would also bring death into the universe. You see the result of their sin almost immediately as their son Cain kills his brother Abel out in the field one day.

Adam and Eve were banished from Eden. It represents the fact that the human race has been banished from the presence of God. We are sinners by nature and by choice. We deserve the death penalty. No matter how much God loves us, He cannot merely overlook our sin. How can we ever be restored to fellowship with God?

*God devised a plan!* Right there in the Garden of Eden He told our parents that He would send His Son to earth as a man, as the seed of the woman, and take our place to bear the penalty for our sin. In doing so He would remain just because His law would be kept but He could also be the justifier of all those who believed in Jesus.

God has devised a means by which the banished can be restored. We call it the gospel and we declare it to all men everywhere.

The gospel is the plan God devised so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him. It is a universal plan in that any human being in any culture from all of human history can be restored simply by believing in Jesus Christ, in His work of dying on the Cross as Substitute. Jesus is therefore the Savior of the whole world - especially, i.e., effectively, for those who believe.

I would add this. God's plan is extraordinary and He goes to great lengths to implement it. The Bible indicates He is at work through both creation and conscience to draw men to Himself who have never heard the gospel. He is certainly working through the preaching of the gospel as He empowers His church to "Go and make disciples of all men."

If and when necessary He can bring the good news of salvation even to those in a coma who are said to be about to die.

Sadly, not everyone is saved in the end. But you can be assured that God is not willing that any should perish and He who devised the means for our salvation is working to bring everyone to a point of decision before death.

## #2 God's Means To Reach You Who Were Banished Cost Him His Son (v18-24)

We left the wise woman from Tekoa before David. Let's see his response to her.

2 Samuel 14:18 Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you." And the woman said, "Please, let my lord the king speak."

2 Samuel 14:19 So the king said, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?" And the woman answered and said, "As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. For your servant Joab commanded me, and he put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant.

2 Samuel 14:20 To bring about this change of affairs your servant Joab has done this thing; but my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that is in the earth."

David recognizes this as a sheme of Joab's. There's no sense that this was from the Lord. He does not react in any manner that could be regarded as 'spiritual.' His reactions are totally unlike the time Nathan came to him.

Still, he acts.

2 Samuel 14:23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 14:24 And the king said, "Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face." So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face.

David could not figure out a way to resolve the dilemma. He could not figure out how to restore his banished one as a father while also satisfying justice and keeping the law. He simply cancelled the death penalty against Absalom then feigned some discipline by not letting him sit at court. He pardoned Absalom with no concern for the breaking of the law.

As we'll see, there was no change in Absalom. He was pardoned, but he was still a rebel.

God forgives sin but it is no easy thing, it is not arbitrary. It was costly.

The latest Barna polling data shows that millions of Americans believe that, in the end, God will save everyone. Among Christians, one-quarter of born again believers said that all people are eventually saved or accepted by

God (25%) and that it doesn't matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same lessons (26%).<sup>1</sup>

God is love and desires all would be saved. But God is holy and He cannot act as David did. He cannot ignore sin for the sake of His love. If He did, He would not be God!

David was both a father and the king. As father he wanted to restore his son. As king he should not overlook justice.

God is both Father and King. His solution to the dilemma is the only one possible. It cost Him His own Son, on the Cross, to save His banished ones.

Every religion, every philosophy, is an attempt to deal with the dilemma of the human condition. The solution mankind comes up with apart from God's revelation of the gospel always involves some half-hearted dealing with the problem of sin.

- Religions suggest certain works that you can do which supposedly make you righteous, earn you salvation. All it does is cheapen God's holiness. It elevates man and devalues God.
- Philosophies by and large ignore God altogether and speculate that man is getting somewhere via his intellect and evolution. Truth is, we are not evolving; we are de-evolving!

No, there is only one way by which we can be made right, made whole, saved.

Obviously, in context, we are talking about human beings being banished but restored through the gospel by getting saved. There's an application for those of us who are saved - for former banished ones. We can become prodigals, banishing ourselves, as it were, to seek after some desire or desires of the flesh.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/484-what-americans-believe-about-universalism-and-pluralism>



The same Cross by which we were saved is where we can find forgiveness and restoration. His justice satisfied, God can and will receive you back with open arms as your Father.

The king had to think of law and justice; the father cried out for his son. That is the heart of our Father in Heaven, our King.

Alexander Maclaren writes,

It is you, you, whom He wants back; you whom He would fain rescue from your aversion to good and your carelessness of Him. It is you whom He seeks, according to the great saying of the Master, 'the Father seeketh' for worshippers in spirit and in truth.

It wasn't easy for God to restore His banished ones. It's not easy to believe and be restored to Him.

But the way has been made by Jesus, by His coming as a man, dying on the Cross, rising from the dead.

