



Studies in the Life of David

Text

Second Samuel 19:9-43

Topic

David had fled Jerusalem but is now invited back to restore his reign over the nation

Title

“The King is Fled; Long Love the King”

Introduction

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was only 17 years old when he became pastor of a small chapel in Waterbeach near Cambridge. At age 19 he was installed as pastor to the congregation of *New Park Street Chapel*. His arrival soon led to such crowds thronging the chapel that services had to be moved to a vast hired hall where up to 10,000 people assembled. On March 18, 1861, the congregation moved permanently to the newly constructed *Metropolitan Tabernacle* seating five thousand people with standing room for another one thousand. The *Metropolitan Tabernacle* was the largest church edifice of its day and can be considered a precursor to the modern megachurch.

Spurgeon pastored the church for 38 years, founding a pastors' college, an orphanage, a Christian literature society and *The Sword and the Trowel* magazine. Over 200 new churches were started in the Home Counties alone, and pastored by his students.

With all that going on you might not expect Spurgeon to call upon his congregation to pray for revival... But he did.

Here is what he said in the December 1866 edition of *The Sword and the Trowel*.

Brethren, let us seek a revival during the present month, that the year may close with showers of blessing, and that the new year may open with abundant benediction. Let us pledge ourselves to form a prayer-union, a sacred band of suppliants, and may God do unto us according to our faith.

It might be good to pause and answer the question, "What is revival?" Here is how Spurgeon defined it (in the same article).

We [can] not speak of the *re-vival* of a thing which never lived before. It is clear that the term "revival" can only be applied to a living soul, or to that which once lived. To be revived is a blessing which can only be enjoyed by those who have some degree of life.

Those who have no spiritual life are not, and cannot be, in the strictest sense of the term, the subjects of a revival. Many blessings may come to the unconverted in consequence of a revival among Christians, but the revival itself has to do only with those who already possess spiritual life. There must be vitality in some degree before there can be a quickening of vitality, or, in other words, a revival.

A true revival is to be looked for in the church of God. The results of the revival will extend to the outside world, but the revival, strictly speaking, must be within the circle of life, and must therefore essentially be enjoyed by the possessors of vital godliness, and by them only.

Is not this quite a different view of revival from that which is common in society; but is it not manifestly the correct one?

Revival, then, is not a meeting or a series of meetings in which nonbelievers are getting saved. It may result in many nonbelievers coming to the Lord but it doesn't start there. It starts with we who are saved. It is a stirring within the heart of a Christian, and in a church, to return to a previous passion for the Lord.

It's just a matter of fact that as we journey homeward to Heaven there will be times in which we individually need reviving. It is equally true that churches, our church, will need times of revival.

Students of past revivals always say that it is a sovereign work of God. God does it *where* and *when* He pleases. While that is true, it **does not** cancel-out our seeking after God for revival. After all, salvation is a sovereign work of God, but we share the Gospel and urge folks to respond, do we not?

We should take the same approach to revival. It is the sovereign work of God **and** we ought to expect Him to do it for us as we ask and seek and knock.

Our passage in Second Samuel can give us some encouragement to seek the Lord for both personal and corporate revival. It describes the return of the king to his proper reign over the nation. We might describe a revival that way - as the return of our King, Jesus Christ, to His proper reign over us.

One verse in particular captures this thought.

2 Samuel 19:14 So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!"

The Lord, I'm sure, wants to "sway" our hearts individually so that when we gather together it is as if we had "the heart of one man" in our worship.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Invite The Lord To Sway Our Hearts Before Him As One Man, and #2 Invite The Lord To Sway Your Heart Before Him As His Man.

#1 Invite The Lord To Sway Our Hearts
Before Him As One Man
(v9-15)

The rebellion against King David was ended when Joab killed the rebel, David's son Absalom. The leaders of the nation, however, were either *hesitant* or *negligent* in bringing David back to the throne.

2 Samuel 19:9 Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom.

2 Samuel 19:10 But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?"

2 Samuel 19:11 So King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his very house?"

2 Samuel 19:12 You are my brethren, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?"

Reality check number one in any talk about revival in the church has to do with the leaders God has raised up. The King must be our passion. He must be my passion.

I'd point out two things from these verses, specifically, about leaders:

1. First, the leaders of Israel said "nothing about bringing back the king." Whether they said nothing at all, or talked about things that were frivolous, their contacts with the people of God lacked spiritual content. It did not point others to the king. While there is a time for everything under the sun, I want to keep my contact with God's people spiritual, pointing them to their King.
2. Second, the leaders were "the last to bring the king back to his house." In context by "house" this meant the palace. For us it is an exhortation to be in God's 'house,' gathered together with God's people. It's like a congregation saying, "I'm here, so where are the leaders God has raised up among us? Why aren't they in His house to minister?"

2 Samuel 19:13 And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.' "

General Joab had defied David's direct command to not kill Absalom. Whether we think Joab was right or wrong to have killed him, in the military that kind of thing could not go without reprimand, so David appointed a new general.

I don't want to make too much of this in terms of application except to say that no one is expendable. Leadership isn't so much a right as it is a responsibility. It's not so much a position I earn as it is a recognition of my passion for the King. If I leave that passion, letting other passions take its place, I have effectively forfeited my position.

2 Samuel 19:14 So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!"

2 Samuel 19:15 Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan.

The leaders responded and the people followed and thereby the king "swayed the hearts of all the men... just as the heart of one man." They had one heartbeat and it was to see the return of the king to reign over them.

Without losing our individuality, the Lord always wants our 'heart,' as a church body, to beat as one.

I'm not saying it doesn't already! Talks like this have a tendency to go negative, or to be received as rebukes. There's a difference between a man speaking words to rebuke you and God using His Word to "sway our hearts."

Although we have an amazing church, filled with wonderful saints, I wouldn't say we are in full revival, would you?

The first step towards keeping what we have and having more, having revival, is to be honest about our need for it. To be open to God bringing it - in whatever form He chooses. It's no good resting on our laurels, or looking back on what we've accomplished. We need to be certain Jesus is enthroned everyday, in a fresh, new excitement as we await His imminent return for us with His reward in His hand.

#2 Invite The Lord To Sway Your Heart
Before Him As His Man
(v16-43)

The remainder of this chapter looks at specific individuals in their relation to the return of the king. If we are to experience revival, the return of the King (as it were), then we must start not with others but with our own hearts. He must sway *my* heart if He is to sway *our* hearts.

2 Samuel 19:16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

2 Samuel 19:17 There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over the Jordan before the king.

2 Samuel 19:18 Then a ferryboat went across to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan.

2 Samuel 19:19 Then he said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart.

2 Samuel 19:20 For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

Shimei had cursed David, thrown stones at him, as he fled from Jerusalem during the Absalom rebellion. Now he came, the first to ask forgiveness.

If revival is to occur in my heart, I need to deal with any sin I find there. I need to come clean before the King, ask for His forgiveness. It may be something very obvious. It may be something very subtle, an attitude or a sin of the spirit. If I continue in my sin I am throwing rocks at the Lord, cursing His work on the Cross.

2 Samuel 19:21 But Abishai the son of Zeruah answered and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?"

2 Samuel 19:22 And David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel?"

2 Samuel 19:23 Therefore the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king swore to him.

David was in a forgiving mood. It was a time for reconciliation, *not* revenge.

The application I'd make here, for us, is how we look upon others. *Of course they deserve death!* But the thoughts of Jesus toward them are to forgive that they might live.

If revival is to occur, I need to be filled with the compassion of Jesus toward others. I must see them as He sees them, as eternal and in need of Him.

2 Samuel 19:24 Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace.

2 Samuel 19:25 So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

2 Samuel 19:26 And he answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,' because your servant is lame.

2 Samuel 19:27 And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king is like the angel of God. Therefore do what is good in your eyes.

2 Samuel 19:28 For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right have I still to cry out anymore to the king?"

Mephibosheth was the severely crippled son of Saul to whom David had shown unusual mercy and kindness. Ziba had come to David at the outset of Absalom's rebellion and slandered Mephibosheth with the goal of getting David to give him all Mephibosheth's possessions and land. Now David learns the truth.

The thing to note here is Mephibosheth's condition during the king's absence. He didn't even care for his regular, physical hygiene.

Now I'm not suggesting that revival can be accomplished by our quitting showering! But there is a suggestion that the revived heart cares little about the things that the world values in terms of externals.

We see this in Mephibosheth's reaction to David's decision, in the next verses.

2 Samuel 19:29 So the king said to him, "Why do you speak anymore of your matters? I have said, 'You and Ziba divide the land.' "

What?! Did I hear that correctly? Ziba deceived David and the resolve is to let him keep half of Mephibosheth's land???

Just when you're on the verge of revival, it seems, there is a test or a trial to show you what your heart truly values. Mephibosheth passed the test.

2 Samuel 19:30 Then Mephibosheth said to the king, "Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house."

What?! Did I hear THAT correctly? Mephibosheth doesn't demand his rights, doesn't shout "Unfair!" In fact, he relinquishes *all* his land, and to the very person who was lying about him.

The only point of reference I have for something like this is to remember back to when I was first saved. Pam and I cared nothing about the things that had previously held our hearts captive. If the Lord wanted to take our house, our possessions, that was not only His business, **it was exciting!**

When we first got saved, we were 'vived.' I'll know I am 're-vived' when I have that similar attitude.

2 Samuel 19:31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan.

2 Samuel 19:32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. And he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very rich man.

2 Samuel 19:33 And the king said to Barzillai, "Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem."

2 Samuel 19:34 But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?"

2 Samuel 19:35 I am today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king?

2 Samuel 19:36 Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. And why should the king repay me with such a reward?

Barzillai's life was all about using the time, the talent, and the treasure that God had given him to support the king in his work. He did it without

accolades and he wasn't looking to be recognized or rewarded this side of eternity.

Perhaps we are seeing in Barzillai what our life can accomplish when we are revived. Our time, our talent, and our treasure will be gladly dedicated to the Lord, submitted to Him for His use as He sees fit.

2 Samuel 19:37 Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you."

2 Samuel 19:38 And the king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you. Now whatever you request of me, I will do for you."

2 Samuel 19:39 Then all the people went over the Jordan. And when the king had crossed over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own place.

Barzillai understood his time was ending. He'd still serve, right up to the end, but others, in this case Chimham, would carry on the work.

You know, all of us have a brief time on earth, a relatively short window of opportunity during which to serve the Lord. Soon we will be looking back on it and I can guarantee all of us will want our lives to speak of the good works we discovered by walking with the Lord.

This doesn't just apply to old men and old women. The Lord is coming imminently. Some, therefore, will be very young, both in the Lord and in physical age. Be about His business now, **right now**. You may have no tomorrow - one way or the other.

The revived heart has a sense of urgency in this spiritual business of furthering the kingdom of God.

2 Samuel 19:40 Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

2 Samuel 19:41 Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, "Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David's men with him across the Jordan?"

2 Samuel 19:42 So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?"

2 Samuel 19:43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, "We have ten shares in the king; therefore we also have more right to David than you. Why then do you despise us - were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?" Yet the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

This was a sad end to an otherwise glad day. David and his entourage crossed the Jordan and arrived at Gilgal where they were met by a throng of citizens from both Judah and Israel. The latter were upset that the Judeans claimed David as theirs to the exclusion of the other tribes. When the Judeans replied that David was part of their own flesh, the Israelite counter-response was that there were ten tribes of them and therefore their claim was much more weighty. Besides, they said, they had been the first to insist that David return to rule over the nation.

By the way, those who were complaining they were being overlooked had been the first to become involved in the rebellion of Absalom.

What is this telling us? It is telling us that revival will be a constant need and therefore a constant pursuit. We may be revived, but others around us will not, and their arguments, their clamoring, can undermine revival if we are not mindful of it.

I began by quoting Charles Spurgeon. Apparently his church was kicking-off a December of meetings emphasizing revival. We don't need a special schedule of meetings. But we **can** look at the meetings already scheduled, can we not? Sunday morning and Wednesday night; Monday evening and Wednesday morning for the men and Saturday night for prayer. We **can** emphasize a pursuit of the presence of God, seek Him for revival in each of them.

The question is, "Do I, do we, want to be **re**-vived?" We answer it everyday by our passion, either for more of the Lord or for something else that has gotten in the way.

Revival is a sovereign work of God **AND** we ought to expect Him to do it as we ask... As we seek... As we knock.

As we close in worship, ask yourself, “Who do I most resemble in this account?”

Am I Abishai, looking upon others as needing judgment rather than extending them compassion and mercy?

Am I the ten tribes, insisting on fairness and acting legalistically?

Or...

Am I Shemei, constantly approaching my King to ask His forgiveness for the rocks I’ve thrown and the way my behavior has cursed the Cross upon which He died to set me free from sin?

Am I Mephibosheth, caring little about the things of this world in comparison to my Lord, and thereby successfully navigating through trials?

Am I Barzillai, tirelessly serving the Lord with my time, talent, and things, having a sense of urgency at His imminent return to rapture the church?