

November 23, 2014

2 Samuel 19

*“When the King Returns”*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

After Joab, the general of David’s army, killed Absalom, for the most part, Absalom’s revolt ended. Upon hearing the news, David, who had been living in exile about 40 miles away in Mahanaim, decided it was safe to return to the palace in Jerusalem. When David arrived he was met by three men: Shimei, Mephibosheth, and Barzillai. It’s interesting to note that these men, just a few months earlier, met with David to say their goodbyes when David fled the city. They’ve reconvened to say, “Welcome home!”<sup>1</sup>

In this study, Pastor Gary, shares insights into the reasons for the difference between the first and second meetings between these men and King David. Additionally, Pastor Gary will help us see the importance of not being too quick to make judgments about others, as well as the importance of modeling the character traits of Mephibosheth and Barzillai.

### Shimei

1. [2 Samuel 16:5-14](#) tells the story of Shimei’s encounter with David and his entourage as they fled Jerusalem.
2. [2 Samuel 19:15-23](#) - *“Then the king returned and went as far as the Jordan. Now the men of Judah had come to Gilgal to go out and meet the king and bring him across the Jordan. Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet king David. With him were a thousand Benjamites, along with Ziba, the steward of Saul’s household and his fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed to the Jordan, where the king was. They crossed at the ford to take the king’s household over and to do whatever he wished. When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell*

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of Mephibosheth, his servant, Ziba, was there to say goodbye on his behalf.

*prostrate before the king and said to him, 'May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first of the whole house of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king.' Then Abishai son of Zeruiah, said, 'Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this? He cursed the Lord's anointed.' David replied, 'What do you and I have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? This day you have become my adversaries! Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Do I not know that today I am king over Israel?' so the king said to Shimei, 'You shall not die.' And the king promised him on oath."*

3. Most Bible scholars question Shimei's sincerity, which, on the surface seems to be nothing more than a tactic to save his life.
4. When you curse the king, throw rocks at the king, and kick dust on the king when he is down and out, and then you act like nothing ever happened, there's got to be something going on!
5. Abishai thought Shimei was a slimy guy and he put forth the suggestion that Shimei should be killed for his actions.
6. Abishai wanted to kill Shimei when he cursed and stoned David when he fled Jerusalem, but both times David said, "No."
7. Pastor Gary said he came to the conclusion that David said, "No," for two very different reasons.
  - a. The first time he was too tired, defeated, and distraught to deal with it, and it was part of being in that beaten down mode that he must have thought he deserved the treatment he received from Shimei.
  - b. The second time came from David's desire to extend mercy.
    - i. [Psalm 103:10-13](#) - "[God] does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him..."
8. Tragically, it appears that Shimei was not very sincere after all, because he violated the mercy David extended to him.
  - a. [1 Kings 2:8-9](#) - " 'And remember, you have with you Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the Lord: 'I will not put you to death by the sword.' But

*now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood.’ ”*

### Mephibosheth

9. **2 Samuel 16:1-4** - *“When David had gone a short distance beyond the summit, there was Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, waiting to meet him. He had a string of donkeys saddled and loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred cakes of raisins, a hundred cakes of figs and a skin of wine. The king asked Ziba, ‘Why have you brought these?’ Ziba answered, ‘The donkeys are for the king’s household to ride on, the bread and fruit are for the men to eat, and the wine is to refresh those who become exhausted in the desert.’ The king then asked, ‘Where is your master’s grandson?’ Ziba said to him, ‘He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, ‘Today the house of Israel will give me back my grandfather’s kingdom.’ Then the king said to Ziba, ‘All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.’ ‘I humbly bow,’ Ziba said. ‘May I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king.’ ”*
10. Ziba basically told David that Mephibosheth wasn’t there to say goodbye because he was an opportunist who wanted to take advantage of David’s weakness during the attempted coup.
11. David was irked by what he thought was Mephibosheth’s response to his kindness, so much so that he gave Ziba everything that belonged to Mephibosheth!
12. **2 Samuel 19:24-30** - *“Mephibosheth, Saul’s grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, ‘Why didn’t you go with me, Mephibosheth?’ He said, ‘My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, “I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.” But Ziba my servant betrayed me. And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God; so do whatever pleases you. All my grandfather’s descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who eat at your table. So what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?’ The king said to him, ‘Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the fields.’ Mephibosheth said to the king, ‘Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has arrived home safely.’ ”*

13. When you examine the story carefully, it's clear that the evidence points to Mephibosheth as being the one who told the truth, because of his appearance and his response.
  - a. His appearance
    - i. He had smelly feet and long, unshaven hair.
  - b. His response
    - i. When David gave half of his rightful possessions to Ziba he didn't argue by saying, "Well, with all due respect, King, I was robbed and deceived by Ziba and I deserve to have everything returned to me!"
    - ii. Mephibosheth simply said, "Ziba can keep it all, because the main thing is that you're back as king!"
14. There is a distinct difference in the character of Ziba and Mephibosheth.
15. Ziba was the real opportunist because he took advantage of Mephibosheth's physical weakness, as well as David's spiritual and emotional weakness in order to manipulate David into giving him all of Mephibosheth's possessions.
16. David made a mistake in judgment because he didn't wait to hear both sides of the story, and when he did hear the truth from Mephibosheth, he realized his error.
17. Pastor Gary encouraged us to be careful not to form an opinion about a person or a matter before we've heard both sides of the story.
18. **Proverbs 18:13** - *"He who answers before listening - that is his folly and his shame."*
19. **Proverbs 18:17** - *"The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him."*
20. David made a decision to not return everything to Mephibosheth because even though he made a rash decision when Ziba deceived him, he made a promise that he had to live with and he was only able to mitigate his hasty decision by dividing the property.

Barzillai

21. **2 Samuel 17:27-29** - *"When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim brought bedding and bowls and articles of pottery. They also brought wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and*

*lentils, honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from cows' milk for David and his people to eat. For they said, 'The people have become hungry and tired and thirsty in the desert.' "*

22. David traveled about 40 miles NNE from Jerusalem to a place called Mahanaim, and upon his arrival Barzillai met him and provided supplies for the king and his family.
23. Barzillai was faithful to David, and he demonstrated his faithfulness by the ways he served, ministered to, and helped the king and his family.
24. **2 Samuel 19:31–39** - *"Barzillai the Gileadite also came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan with the king and to send him on his way from there. Now Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years of age. He had provided for the king during his stay in Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. The king said to Barzillai, 'Cross over with me and stay with me in Jerusalem, and I will provide for you.' But Barzillai answered the king, 'How many more years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? I am now eighty years old. Can I tell the difference between what is good and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats and drinks? Can I still hear the voices of men and women singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? Your servant will cross over the Jordan with the king for a short distance, but why should the king reward me in this way? Let your servant return, that I may die in my own town near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever pleases you.' The king said, 'Kimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him whatever pleases you. And anything you desire from me I will do for you.' So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed over. The king kissed Barzillai and gave him his blessing, and Barzillai returned to his home."*
25. David would never forget Barzillai's personal ministry and kindness.
26. Before David died, he gave instructions to his Solomon, his son, concerning Barzillai.
  - a. **1 Kings 2:7** - *"But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead and let them be among those who eat at your table. They stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom."*
27. The story of Barzillai and David teaches us that God will never forget or forsake the righteous.
28. **Psalms 37:28** - *"For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones."*

29. [Hebrews 11:6](#) - *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*
30. [Luke 18:8b](#) - *“... when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”*

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Samuel 19:1-39](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they were angry with God or cursed God.
  - a. Was there an Abishai present who wanted to “kill” you?
  - b. Was there a time when you realized you were sinning against the Lord by kicking dust on the king, so to speak?
  - c. Read and discuss [Psalm 103:10-13](#).
  - d. Looking back, how thankful are you that the Lord, like David with Shimei, extended his mercy to you?
  - e. Did you, like Shimei, violate the mercy the Lord showed you?
4. How has the Lord ministered to you and brought you to the place of seeking his forgiveness, appealing to his mercy, and getting right with him?
5. Allow the people in the group to share their experiences about times when, like Mephibosheth, someone close to them has betrayed him or her?
6. How have you handled the consequences of the actions of the person or persons who betrayed you?
7. Read and discuss [Proverbs 18:13, 17](#).
8. Share examples of the ways the Lord has blessed you, like David blessed Barzillai, because of your faithfulness.
9. Read and discuss [1 Kings 2:7](#), [Psalm 37:28](#), and [Hebrews 11:6](#).
10. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: slow down and prayerfully consider both sides of the story concerning a matter or a person; demonstrate faithfulness, personal integrity, and character, like

Mephibosheth and Barzillai; remember the mercy and forgiveness of the Lord; be thankful for the Scriptural promise that the Lord will never forget nor forsake the righteous.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).