

Respectfully Requesting from a Superior:
A Prayer Lesson
2 Samuel 14:1 - 4

Nutshell: The wise woman's prayer posture teaches us much about good prayer!

I. Context: Absalom killing and running off.

II. Text

2 Sam 14:1 And Joab the son of Zeruah knew that the king's heart *was* on Absalom.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

Review

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
 2. **Saul** demonstrated *man's* kind of rule. God previewed *His* version of king through **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 says David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. **2 Chron 17:3** indicates a better pre-sin David.
- C. David was God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for later kings of Judah, 2 Kings 14:3
1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5.
 2. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- D. **DAVID'S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING***
1. Conquer Jebus (Jerusalem), where Goliath's head was, 1 Sam 17:54
 2. Retrieved the Ark from its 'wanderings', 6:1-19; tragically wrongly, 1 Chron 15:2; then rightly & joyfully
 3. Build a permanent form for the Tabernacle, the Temple.
 - ★ 4. God chose **Abraham** to bless all nations. Now He chose

David's line to bring forth the King of all nations

5. 1 Sam 20:14 oath in 2 Sam 9. *OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.
- E. David's sin and its consequences
1. David murdered to cover adultery, Ch 11. Now David, though forgiven, *would see continued violence*, ch 12
 2. David's son died, *not*, per Deut 24:16, as a cohort. He was 'replaced' by Solomon/ Jedediah, "adored" by God.
 3. Chap 13, Amnon was lovesick over his half-sister Tamar
 - a. By deceit, he raped her, then appallingly dumped her
 - b. Tamar was a heroine of the faith
 - c. Absalom took her in but advised silence
 4. Absalom hid his rage 2 years, then convinced David to send all 19 of his brothers to his sheep-shearing party
 - a. Absalom ordered his servants to kill Amnon, v 28-29
 - b. The other 17 sons lit out, taking the longer route
 - c. A confused messenger arrived first, reporting *all* the king's sons dead. Jonadab put it together correctly.
 - d. Absalom ran off to his granddad, Talmi, v 37-39
- F. In our section: 2 Sam 14:1-4, Joab seeks to facilitate David's desire for reconciliation with Absalom by sending a wise woman with a parallel story and need.

Kid-speak: Last time, Absalom killed his brother Amnon, then ran away. King David wanted his son Absalom to come back, but he didn't know how to do it, so **Joab** is going to try to help David do that.

Outline:

- I. Joab reads David's Heart, 14:1
- II. Joab Retains a Wise Woman, 14:2-3
 - A. Her appearance as a mourner
 - B. Her script
- III. Lessons in Prayer
 - G. "And Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart was on Absalom"
 1. 2 Sam 13:38-39 told of David being "consumed" with going out to Absalom, 3 years after his escape
 - a. Same time period as our verse, so how could this

- “consumption” be with fighting Absalom?
- b. But several commentators go that direction.
- c. The Hebrew at the end of chap 13 has its difficulties
- 2. Perceiving David’s preoccupation, Joab (David’s nephew) sought to facilitate David’s *reunion* with Absalom, as is apparent from the story Joab scripted
- H. “Joab knew”
 - 1. Apparently *despite* the king doing his best not to let on
 - 2. “The king’s heart *was* on Absalom”
 - a. Absalom had righted a wrong, but wrongfully, putting David in a bind;
 - b. a bind from which he would not extricate himself successfully, mainly (to me) from indecision
 - c. Yet Absalom’s increasing misdeeds are fully on his *own head*

Kid-speak: Joab knew David missed Absalom, even though David didn’t say anything. Can your mom or dad tell when you’re sad sometimes, even though you didn’t say anything?

2 Samuel 14:2 And Joab sent to Tekoah and he brought a wise woman from there, and he said to her, “Please be a mourner, and put on garments of bereavement, please. And do not anoint yourself with oil. Yes, you are to be as a woman mourning these many days for one who died.

2 Sam 14:3 “And you are to go to the king and plead with him according to this word.” And Joab put the words into her mouth.

- I. This is fairly clever
 - 1. Here we see a very insightful side to Joab. Perhaps he’s not simply the impulsive lunkhead he sometimes has shown.
 - 2. And his plan was effective, as we’ll see
- J. “Tekoah” was a city about 10 miles south of Jerusalem
 - 1. There was a reputedly wise woman there
 - 2. Joab probably sought out a woman in particular to gain a couple of different advantages to his purpose:
 - a. In her ‘need’ as a widow, David would be more disposed to come to her aid
 - b. Making her children’s situations more pressing
 - 3. There will be another “wise woman” in 20:16

- K. “Be a mourner,” meaning to pretend to be
1. In that regard, not too dissimilar from Jonadab’s request in 13:5, “Make yourself sick”
 2. The word “pretend” isn’t present in either case. It could be “make yourself mourn” here. “Make yourself” certainly implies pretense, though.
- L. 3 components: mourning garments, mourning habits (no anointing), and an appearance of long mourning
1. Joab’s instructions are comprehensive
 2. As we have seen, pantomimes of reality were not automatically viewed as sinful deception
 - a. Consider *Nathan’s* story to David, 2 Sam 12
 - b. *Jonathan* and *David* had pretended David was out of town, 1 Sam 20. The pretend part was necessary to test for a hypothesized response.
 - c. The motive and end determine the legitimacy
 - d. *Amnon*, on the other hand, had moved from shaky ground to a deeply evil and violent deception.

Kid-speak: Joab got a lady to pretend like her son died. Was that OK? Yes, it was to show David a story like his own life.

- M. ““And you are to go in a and speak to him according to this word.’ And Joab put the words in her mouth.”
1. The props came with a script
 2. Joab has this well thought out. It’s a good script.

2 Sam 14:4 And the woman of Tekoah spoke to the king; yes, she fell on her face to the ground, and she bowed and said, “Save, O king!”

- N. It is easier (for me) to imagine the woman adlibbing than Joab coming up with this script
1. The reason? The speech’s brilliance in her lips. It *sounds* like she was selling it from her own soul.
 2. Which she well could have been. But it says Joab scripted it, so- Oscars to both of them.
- O. Whatever the means was for gaining audience to the king, it is heartening that the king was available
1. Presumably, the judicial system was designed after the Jethro pattern, Exod 18

2. Therefore, this would have been a more difficult case
3. Praise God that His throne of petition is ‘open for business’ 24/7! All our cases are His frontline concerns.
 - a. ... making access to Him more ‘business as usual’?
 - b. *Or* more urgent?
 - c. ↑ There’s a right answer and an actual answer, betrayed by our daily prayer habits

Kid-speak: The lady got to talk to the king of the whole country! Wow! But what King can **we** talk to every day? **God!**

P. Two acts of humility

1. First, descending, face to ground
2. Second, making a bow
3. We’ll come back to these

Q. “Save, O king!”

1. An imperative. You actually know the Hebrew. We sing it in Psalm 20:9 *Hoshea*.
2. It is asked of earthly kings on other occasions. They had power to intervene, rescue, and right wrongs.
3. It is *most fitting* for us to ask this of God!
 - a. As in Ps 20:9
 - b. We also ask it in our Ps 3:7
 - c. It’s the first word of our Ps 12: “Rescue”
 - d. It’s the first request in our English Ps 54, but lit., “God, by Your name, save me.”
 - e. Christ asks it in Ps 22:21
 - f. Jer 17:14, “Heal me, Yahweh, and I’ll be healed. Save me, and I’ll be saved; for You are my praise.”
4. It gives us a helpful perspective to say that **all prayer** can be properly viewed as extensions of “Save me/ us”
 - a. A sin nature has remained within me: “Save, O God!”
 - b. The world allures me: “Rescue, dear Jesus!”
 - c. Men threaten to crush me: “Shield me, Father!”
 - d. The Devil lays traps: “Direct my path! Open my eyes, blessed Spirit!”

Kid-speak: The lady said, “Save me, King!” How many ways do we need God to save us every day? Probably 100! (That we can actually get around to asking.)

- R. Let's go back and consider **bowing low** in making request
1. Though her request is a pretense, it's a pretense of reality
 - a. And the need she's *getting to* in David's life is a real one.
 - b. And she *is* actually petitioning the king.
 2. As to the particulars: they are found in non-pretend situations, as we'll see
- S. Therefore, consider her bowing face down before an earthly king! How much greater respect, urgency, and ardency should characterize our petitions to God!
- 1 First, in *attitude*
 - a. Do we even speak to God as a king? Or are we basically buddy-buddy? (If your king befriends you, does he cease to be your king?)
 - b. Do we *supplicate*? Or is it just a list laid out, maybe explained?
 - c. A supplicant is thinking, "This is something the king *doesn't* have to do, even though He's kind."
 2. Secondly, in *physical expression*: going face down, then bowing
 - a. "I don't need to kneel. I'll just humble my *heart*."
 - b. But will a humble heart resist kneeling? Or instead, will bowing low help *express* a humble heart?
 - c. Consider Jehoshaphat and the people's prayer, 2 Chron 20:18, or Joshua, Josh 5:14
 - d. Yes, there *are* instances of prostrating in *deception*, e.g., 2 Sam 1:2. Do they void *sincere* bowing low?
 3. Have you ever *knelt* before God? Or *bowed* all the way down? Both *feel* quite different.
 - a. Bodies generally serve to 'embody' and enact our decisions.
 - b. Sometimes a specific act isn't attached to a decision, but humility in prayer *can* be expressed bodily
 - c. With Scriptural example backing us, a truly humbled heart should *want* to express itself bodily
 - i. Unless we've trained our minds against it
 - ii. Does others' *misguided* use of bowing teach me avoidance? That's poor equivalence.

Kid-speak: The lady bowed down before King David? Can we bow down before God in prayer? Sure! He's a King!

- ☞ 4. It appears that her obeisance was initial; then she rose to address the king.
- T. Her posture was not arm-twisting. It was real respect.
1. But her petition was to *change* David's *mind*
 2. Generally, we're not in that mode- exactly
 - a. 1st, because God already knows what we need, Matt 6:8
 - b. 2nd, we mainly *align our thoughts* and feelings with what He's already revealed as His will, Matt 6:9-15; 1 Jn 5:14
 3. But this alignment brings both deep introspection ("Have I understood You correctly?") and urgency ("The King's will must be brought to pass!")
 - a. In prayer, we are bringing ourselves into the counsel room of God Most High!
 - b. Nonchalance is really out of character
 - c. Nonchalance suggests we didn't make it quite as far as the throne room! We're out in the anteroom.. practicing?
- U. Two prayer lessons from James
1. First, "You don't have because you DON'T ASK," Jms 4:2
 - a. "Make your requests known" is the command of Philip 4:6-7. We have to **ask**.
 - b. *But* some asking can be unworthy of the name
 - c. When we list needs, which is necessary, we must take care
 - d. We may be *lacking a spirit of petition*. **Urgency** should be our watchword.
 - e. We are warned against wordiness, Matt 6:7, *battalogo*,
 - f. and meandering, Eccl 5:2. Get to the point.
 - g. Concision of word; expansion of heart.
 - h. Don't pray longer; pray deeper (ala "Don't work harder...")

Kid-speak: The Bible says that we don't get things from God because we don't _____. Ask!

2. Secondly, "you ask wrongly- for yourselves, that you may expend *what you receive* for your *own* desires"
 - a. That is, rather than *aligning* our desires with God, we're using Him to *feed* our desires
 - b. Prayer should be a trusting process: "God, I know that if I ask for what You say is best, I'll get also be getting what's best for me."
 - c. And prayer should be a learning process: learning what

- God's will is
 - i. *What* to ask
 - ii. *How* to ask
- 3. Time and attention are required
 - a. One reason for *sequestered* prayer, Matt 6:6
 - b. It doesn't 'come natural.' Read instructions; carry into prayer; tweak. Repeat.

Kid-speak: The Bible says we also don't get things from God because we're only asking for what ___ like. "WE." We should ask God to show us in the Bible what we _____. "Need."

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")
The King will see you now.



V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?**
How have I lost righteousness?
Do I show reverence to the Most High in my prayers?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?
I will use prostration to express my humility before God.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**
God, it is a *privilege* to humble myself before so caring a King.

Vision: **HUMILITY** *should* be a given in prayer. But true humility will also infuse **BOLDNESS!**

"O King, have not You Yourself said...?"

"I know that *this* (fill in the blank with His will) delights You, O Lover of my soul. Will You not grant it to me/ us?"

We must be on our guard, since we *can* make anything fake or hollow, but prayer's true humility will inform its zeal, and vice versa.