

Rebellion 2.0

2 Samuel 20:1–26

The Twenty-First Sermon on Second Samuel

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The first time you experience your child say to you, “No,” is a big shock! It’s unexpected and it sort of knocks you off your feet. But then you recover, discipline appropriately, and then things are back to normal. Eventually what happens? It happens again, and again, and again, each time seemingly more devious than the last. This shouldn’t surprise us, really, because the Word of God says “in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51). We are all born sinners with the ability to actually sin.

So we come again to 2 Samuel this morning and what do we see? For several chapters we’ve been watching David’s son, Absalom, rebel. And finally we saw David put that rebellion down. But right afterward it happens again! Why? And where is God in all this? This morning I want you to focus in on Sheba’s rebellion and what it teaches us about ourselves, about Satan’s strategies, and finally, what it says about the God we serve. So note three things:

1. *The Heart of Man*
2. *The Kingdom of Satan*
3. *The Power of God*

May the Holy Spirit lead us into the truth of his Word today.

The Heart of Man

Sheba's rebellion teaches us about *the heart of man*. So right on the heels of David's army's crushing defeat of Absalom's rebellion, we read that in the midst of the argument of the beginning and end of chapter 19, another rebellion is brewing. This time it's not a family member of David, but a man named **Sheba** who was from the tribe of Benjamin (v. 1). And he makes a noisy scene, blowing a trumpet and declaring, "**We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!**" (v. 1) And in contrast to **the men of Judah** who **followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem** we read that **all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri** (v. 2). So notice that this is not the same kind of rebellion as Absalom's. Absalom's was to remove David. Sheba's is merely to secede from the kingdom and to live as a separate kingdom.

One application of this is that because of our sinfulness we are so easily tempted to divide from our brothers and sisters in the church and to do our own thing, not worrying about how that's going to affect those you leave behind. Last week I posted an invite to church on Facebook. Then I got one of *those* comments. Even if you're not on Facebook, you know what I'm talking about. Someone said, "United Reformed. Isn't that an oxymoron?" I sad sadly yes because ever since sin entered the world the church has been a mess because whenever you get two sinners in a room you have three opinions! One of the ways we tear Christ's body into pieces like a worthless rag is when we let our personal preferences dictate.

And then we start saying things like, “I’m just not being fed anymore.” Then we leave.

Last week someone said, “Pastor Danny, that was a great sermon. The theology was good, but the application was great. Give us more of that.” Okay. Brothers and sisters, if I can say it like this: because of our sinful natures, too many of us view the church like a cruise ship and not like a start-up restaurant. Too many of us think that like a cruise ship, the church is just there; then you get to board; and then you get to go when you want and eat at the buffet, picking and choosing what you like, taking a bunch of this but passing over that. Instead, we need to view the church as a brand new restaurant like those popping up along Coast highway. It takes your personal involvement. You have to be there to build it. You have to care for it when it gets dirty. You need to welcome people when they come. You need to care for everyone else who is there with you.

The Kingdom of Satan

Back to our text. So there is this rebellion 2.0 with Sheba. That’s what we see. That’s on the surface. Have you ever seen one of those images of an iceberg, where on top you see this massive white iceberg, then you look down and see the water level, but then you look even further down and you see an even bigger iceberg you did not know existed? That’s what you have to see here. We see Sheba, but underneath the surface you need to see *the kingdom of Satan*.

Underneath this rebellion of Sheba against David is that struggle between the two seeds. Do you what I'm talking about? Turn with me to Genesis 3:15. After Adam and Eve's rebellion against God, the Lord God said this to the serpent:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

Ever since then, the history in our Bibles and the history of the world has been a struggle between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, between the world and the church, between Satan and the Savior Jesus Christ. What's the Tower of Babel? Just an irrelevant Sunday school story? No! It's the story of this rebellion! Why does Pharaoh seek the infanticide of Israel's male children? Because behind him was Satan, seeking to snuff out the line of Jesus Christ. Who are the nations the Lord commands Joshua to wipe out? Examples of God being a moral monster who commands genocide? No! They are the earthly manifestations of the kingdom of Satan!

And here we are today and the news media wants us to stand open-mouthed in disbelief that Christians are being killed, marched out of their cities, and having their ancient places of worship destroyed. What is happening in Iraq and Syria, what is happening in Nigeria and Sudan, what is happening with more intensity in China, under the cover of what is happening in Iraq, with churches being bulldozed because they threaten the State, are atrocities and sins that we as Christians alone have the worldview to explain. Sin is that destructive. What we are witnessing is total depravity unleashed. But even more, this is great enemy of

Christ and his church stretching as far as the chain God has put on him will allow, to wreak havoc while he can.

And our story of Sheba leading another rebellion against David is yet another incarnation of that ancient prophecy of Genesis 3:15. So David, as the seed of the woman, fights against the seed of the serpent. First he sends Amasa, his new commander, to quell Sheba's rebellion in verses 4-5. When Amasa took his sweet time, David sent Abishai to do what needed to be done in verses 6-13, including eliminating Amasa, who had become a part of Sheba's and Satan's rebellion. And in 14-22 the rebellion comes to an end through the army of David besieging a city and a wise woman in the city perceiving by faith what was really going on. And for now, the seed of the woman was safe.

The Power of God

Now, when you see what is going on in the world right now, are you tempted to ask, "Where is God?" "Is God powerful enough to change this?" I know I am. David was, too. Read the Psalms and the recurring question among constant persecution, "How long, O Lord." So where is God? As I've said it before with other chapters like this that hardly mention the Lord, if at all, the Lord who made the heavens and earth is where he has always been. He's ruling over all just as much in times of blessing as in times of cursing. He's just as much in charge of the world when it's on fire as when it is as peace. It doesn't feel that way to us, but it is true.

So here is yet another sinful rebellion inspired by the great rebel himself, Satan. Nevertheless, God's promise is that ultimately his power will overcome and the seed of the woman will crush the seed of the serpent. The end of Sheba's rebellion is just one episode of the power of God overcoming the power of Satan and sin.

This is also personal for us. Come back tonight as we pick up in 1 Peter 1 with an amazing promise that we will persevere all the way to our heavenly inheritance because of the power of God preserving us. Some of us are depressed today. Some of us are beaten down today. Some of us are not sure if we can make it through the week financially. Some of us are tired of the rat race. Some of us are under assault from our families. What's your struggle today? The next time and then every subsequent time you feel this way, I want you to remember David. He was just like you. He was a sinner. He was depressed. He was taunted by his foes. But God was powerful in his life to uphold him. God is powerful in your life to uphold you.

This story also teaches us to see the big picture. No matter what the gates of hell throw at us, Jesus Christ's kingdom continues. I mentioned before that once we finish 2 Samuel we will begin a series through the Book of Revelation. That's what it's all about: Jesus Christ reigns and rules over all the kings and kingdoms of the earth and his kingdom will endure while all others will end.

Are you a citizen of that kingdom today? If not, join it by humbling yourself before the King and putting your trust in him. Amen.