

“Loyalty”  
2 Samuel 15:13-22  
(Preached at Trinity, September 22, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The first half of **Chapter 15** records the wretched treason of Absalom. His actions against his father were truly reprehensible. Absalom was narcissistic and completely void of integrity. He was a cold-blooded killer.
2. Absalom was patient, working deceptively over a period of four years to steal the hearts of the people. David's love for his son blinded him of the treachery.
3. Finally, when Absalom had everything in place for seizing the throne he asked David for permission to go to Hebron. He used the pretense of piety – he claimed he had made a vow.  
**2 Samuel 15:7 NAU** - "Now it came about at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron."
4. **Verse 9** records the final words David would ever speak to Absalom, "Go in peace." Peace was the last thing on the mind of Absalom. He duped 200 men to accompany him. They were completely ignorant of the scheme, but gave the appearance that Absalom had their full support.
5. Suddenly, the scheme is uncovered.  
**2 Samuel 15:13 NAU** - "Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."
6. It is interesting, in spite of David's coddling of Absalom, he knew him all too well. Upon hearing that Absalom had stolen the hearts of the people David's words were unambiguous: "Run for your life!" **Verse 14**
7. What follows are beautiful displays of loyalty displayed in several ways. They prove the character trait that was completely absent in Absalom. Absalom was narcissistic and self-absorbed. He really only cared for himself. Loyalty demands looking outside of ourselves. It demands a higher principle.
8. I've only preached on loyalty a couple times in my years of ministry. This is amazing considering the significance of this important character trait. The last time we observed the topic of loyalty was our consideration the loyal friendship of Jonathan and David. Jonathan was remarkable in his faithfulness and loyalty to David. The author of 1 & 2 Samuel wants us to be stirred by these examples of loyalty.
9. What do you think of the subject of loyalty? Do you consider it an important character trait? Would you consider yourself to be loyal?  
How do you define loyalty?
10. There are various ways to define loyalty.  
Loyalty refers to steadfast, resolute faithfulness towards a person, country, group or cause. It refers to a steadfast commitment.

- A. Loyalty to places and things are often beneficial in an orderly society. People have often been loyal to certain brands – product loyalty. Many are fiercely loyal to their particular sports team. People are loyal to their nation. Patriotism is important as citizens work for the good of the whole.
- B. The most important loyalty is directed towards other people – your marriage, family, your church. Your relationship with God demands absolute loyalty.  
**Exodus 20:3 NAU** - "You shall have no other gods before Me."  
**Matthew 10:33 NAU** - "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."
- C. It is interesting that one of the OT words often translated “loyal” is **חָסֵד**. The best way to think of **חָסֵד** is in the sense of covenant love. Covenant love demands being faithful or trustworthy.  
**Proverbs 20:6 NAU** - "any a man proclaims his own loyalty, But who can find a trustworthy man?"
- D. Loyalty is displayed through love, devotion, dedication and commitment to the well-being of another.
11. There are several important points as we consider the subject of loyalty.
- A. Christian loyalty isn't blind loyalty. It isn't loyalty that is void of a consideration of those persons, groups, or causes worthy of our loyalty and faithfulness. We also can't discount the element of duty or of covenantal responsibility.
1. Blind loyalty has sometimes resulted in the support of dictators such as Nazi Germany or the blind following of a cult leader.
  2. The usual problem, however, is not blind loyalty to undeserving objects but our failure to practice faithfulness to commitments that demand our loyalty.
- B. Again, our highest loyalty is always directed towards God. This means that all other loyalties are shaped by our loyalty to God. No other loyalty must ever be allowed to usurp our loyalty to God. Peter said, “We must obey God rather than man.”
- C. Our loyalty towards God is based upon unshakable faithfulness towards a perfect being. He will never fail us or disappoint us. Thus, our loyalty is never disappointed. No one will ever regret their loyalty to God.
- D. Every object of our loyalty apart from God is plagued by the wretchedness of sin. This is universal. Flaws in the objects of our loyalty does not dismiss us from faithfulness to them.
- Your husband or wife is sinful, terribly flawed – but this doesn't relieve you of your responsibility of loyalty.
  - Your church is not perfect—yet its imperfections are not an immediate reason for abandonment.
  - Your government is not perfect. It is sometimes sinful, but you owe loyalty to it. Many are troubled by this statement, particularly in a day of flag burning and kneeling during the anthem. We shouldn't miss the pattern of Daniel. He was absolutely committed to God, while remaining loyal to Nebuchadnezzar.  
**1 Timothy 2:1-3 NAU** - "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup> This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,"

12. What value do you place upon loyalty? God places high value upon it.  
**Proverbs 19:22 NAU** - "What is desirable in a man is his kindness,"  
 The word is אֱמֻנָה. As we know, it can translated in various ways but it carries the idea of covenant faithfulness. The word loyalty fits here.  
 Of course, the pattern for loyalty is God Himself. אֱמֻנָה when applied to God refers to God's covenant love, His covenant faithfulness. His loyalty to His covenant promises.
13. As David flees from Jerusalem he has encounters with several individuals. We'll see several examples of selfless loyalty. For many, it was faithfulness unto death. And we'll see this loyalty in the life of David himself.
- I. We find the great loyalty of the king's subjects – **Verses 13-22**
- A. First, we find those described as "the king's servants" – **v.15**
1. When David left, they left. We find here a beautiful picture of the faithful loyalty of his household. In the Hebrew, the expression "with him" in **Verse 16** literally means "at his feet."
  2. They told David they were prepared to follow him and do whatever he asked of them. They didn't look first to their own safety.  
**2 Samuel 15:15 NAU** - "Behold, your servants *are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses.*"
  3. The CSV translates it: "Whatever my lord the king decides, we are your servants." In other words, "Whatever you ask of us we will serve you."
  4. What an example to us as we consider our service to Christ – "Whatever you ask of me, I will serve You."
- B. Then we observe the loyalty of Ittai, the Gittite – **Verses 19-22**
1. Ittai had only been with David a short time. Why should he share in David's adversity? David released him to serve under the reign of Absalom. "return and remain with the king" – i.e. Absalom  
 Instead, Ittai pledges his loyalty to David. His only king was David.
  2. This dialogue reminds us of Naomi and Ruth
    - a. Ruth's words:  
**Ruth 1:16 NAU** - "Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God."
    - b. Ittai's words to David:  
**2 Samuel 15:21 NAU** - "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be."
  3. Ittai was a Philistine. The Philistine god was Dagon. But notice he professes faith in God and loyalty to David – "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives . . ."
  4. He was willing to risk everything for David – loyal and faithful even unto death. Ittai and his 600 men and their families would have numbered several thousand.  
**2 Samuel 15:22 NAU** - "So Ittai the Gittite passed over with all his men and all the little ones who *were* with him."

- C. Next, we turn our attention to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests – **Verse 24**  
**2 Samuel 15:24 NAU** - "Now behold, Zadok also *came*, and all the Levites with him carrying the ark of the covenant of God. "
1. This wasn't an attempt to protect the Ark. They weren't concerned that Absalom would attack or destroy the Ark. Nor were they carrying the Ark forth into battle as in the days of Eli when the Ark was carried into battle with the Philistines – and subsequently captured.
  2. The Levites recognized that Absalom was seizing the throne illegally. David was God's anointed king and they were pledging their loyalty to God's king. They assumed that where David went, the Ark had to go. It was really a testimony to their loyalty to God, even upon threat to their lives.  
 The narrator wants all to know that David is God's king. Notice in **Verses 15-19** how many times David is referred to as "the king."
  3. These two men proved their loyalty to David not by staying with him like Ittai, but by returning to Jerusalem. When David told them to return the Ark to Jerusalem they obeyed and returned, knowing Absalom could have marked them as traitors.
- D. David's next encounter was with Hushai. He is described by the wonderful title, "David's friend."  
**2 Samuel 15:32 NAU** - "It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn and dust on his head."  
**2 Samuel 15:37 NAU** - "So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city"  
**2 Samuel 16:16 NAU** - "Now it came about when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom"
1. "Archite" describes the region settled by the tribe of Benjamin. If this is the case he would have been of the tribe of Saul. Yet, he had declared his allegiance to David.
  2. David would send this faithful friend back to Jerusalem to seek a way to diminish the counsel of Ahithophel.
  3. And he would prove himself a loyal and faithful friend.
- II. We find the great loyalty in the king himself – **Verses 24-26**
- A. David's loyalty to God prevented him from giving in to selfish desires
1. He told Zadok to return the Ark to Jerusalem. The Ark was the symbol of God's presence. As much as he may have desired the Ark to remain with him and removed from Absalom, David knew the Ark belonged in Jerusalem.
  2. God had already declared where His name would reside.  
**Deuteronomy 12:5 NAU** - "But you shall seek *the LORD* at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come."  
**2 Kings 23:27 NAU** - "The LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"

3. True loyalty brings us to follow God in obedience even at great personal risk or personal loss.
- B. David's loyalty to God led him to trust his life entirely to God
1. If the Ark was the throne of God and the presence of God it would be assumed that it was also the power of God. David knew that God was God of all the earth and could not be confined to a particular place. If God wanted to return him to Jerusalem He was capable of doing so.  
**2 Samuel 15:25-26 NAU** - "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the LORD, then He will bring me back again and show me both it and His habitation. <sup>26</sup> "But if He should say thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."
  2. David humbly trusted his life into the hands of God. His words were similar to the One who would come after him:  
**Luke 22:42 NAU** - "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."
  3. David knew that his ordeal was the result of God's just judgment.  
**2 Samuel 12:10-11 NAU** - "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' <sup>11</sup> "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight."
  4. David's loyalty led him to cast himself entirely upon the mercy of God and to rest in God's Providence.  
**Psalms 51:4 NAU** - "Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge."  
**2 Samuel 15:25-26 NAU** - "The king said to Zadok, "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the LORD, then He will bring me back again and show me both it and His habitation. <sup>26</sup> "But if He should say thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."
- C. David never lost faith in God's covenant.
1. Notice in **Verse 16** David left ten of his concubines to keep the house. This will have disastrous consequences but there is an important point to consider. David had every intention of returning.  
**2 Samuel 7:16 NAU** - "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."
  2. David's great faith in God did not cancel out his wisdom or resourcefulness. He remained a king and leader and he would ultimately out-manuever Absalom.

Conclusion:

1. In the midst of these incredible examples of selfless loyalty, we also have before us terrible displays of disloyalty. David was greatly grieved at the betrayal of his own son, his beloved son Absalom.
2. If this was not bad enough, David received news that his most trusted advisor had also defected.  
**2 Samuel 15:31 NAU** - "Now someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom."  
 This was a terrible blow to David. Not only was he a trusted advisor, David considered him a dear friend.  
**Psalm 41:9 NAU** - "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me."
3. What do you do in the presence of betrayal and disloyalty? How do you handle situations of unfaithfulness? David acted shrewdly, but trusted God to deliver him.  
**2 Samuel 15:31 NAU** - "And David said, "O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness."
4. Matthew Henry wrote: "We must second our prayer with our endeavours, else we tempt God. It is good service to countermine the policy of the church's enemies."<sup>1</sup>
5. It was at that time that God blessed the faithful loyalty of David. Hushai arrived. He is referred to in **Verse 37** as David's friend, another loyal friend. Hushai would be God's tool for David's deliverance. God answers our prayers in ways we at times could never imagine.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 463.