

David's Stipulation

Call to Worship: Psalm 67

1st Scripture: 1 Samuel 18:17-30; 19:11-18; 25:44

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 3:6-16

Hymn #27 (Supp)- *Be Thou My Vision*

Hymn Insert- *Speak O Lord*

Hymn #79- *Though Troubles Assail Us*

Introduction:

Following a contentious dispute between Abner and Ishbosheth, Abner has determined to defect to David, with the intention of bringing the entire kingdom of Israel over to David as well. And so, Abner sent messengers to David, asking David to make a covenant with him, unto this end. Certainly, seeing this as an act of divine providence, in keeping with God's promise to set David upon the throne, over *all* Israel, David responds favorably to this proposal, but not without a necessary condition. This morning, we will consider the one stipulation, which David requires of Abner, before he will even see him, in order to enter into a covenant with him, leading up to the transferral of the kingdom over to David.

I. David's Stipulation

"And David said, 'Good, I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you: you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face' (vs. 13).

And so, David being the rightful king over all Israel, accepts Abner's covenant proposal, but only on the condition that Michal (Saul's daughter and David's first, lawful wife), is returned to him. Now brethren, before we look a bit more closely at this stipulation, let's try to appreciate the history between David and Michal, which has brought us here:

Michal takes us back to the time, when David slew the giant, Goliath (1 Sam. 17). Remember, when Israel was at war with the Philistines, but no one would dare step up and face the Philistine giant, Goliath? In 1 Samuel 17:25, David was informed of the reward that would be given to the man who would face and defeat the giant, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that the man who kills him the king [Saul] will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel."

Of course we know, that David, in fact, then slew the giant, ultimately receiving none of those things in their proper sense. While David was entitled to Merab, Saul's oldest daughter, Saul ultimately reneged and gave her to another man in marriage. The riches didn't last too long, because Saul, once he became jealous of David, sought to kill him, and chased him all throughout the land, as a fugitive. And as far as tax exemption for the family goes, David had to move his family to the other side of the Jordan river, to live in Mizpah of Moab, to protect them from Saul, on account of Saul's unjust pursuit of David. David was "entitled" from the standpoint of the world, but Saul's word was as good as his character, and yet, we don't find David ever complaining about his lot, in this regard, do we? He was content to rest his hope in those promises, which were secured by the Word of God. We could certainly benefit from David in this regard, as well brethren, but that is for another sermon.

Needless to say, Merab was kept from David, but Michal, Saul's younger daughter, we were told, "loved David." Saul, of course, sought to use his daughter, Michal, as bait, so as to try to have David killed. He pretended to delight in David, and to desire to have him as a son-in-law, and so he offered his daughter for the "fair and generous" dowry price of one hundred Philistine foreskins. Of course, he had hoped that David would be killed by the Philistines in the process. However, because God has a way of thwarting the evil plans of the wicked, and that, in somewhat of an "in your face" fashion, David comes back with *two* hundred four skins, for good measure. And Saul, certainly with reluctance (on the inside), gives Michal to David in marriage. And the newlyweds are happily married!

Michal was David's first love, and first wife, and no doubt, he loved her, even as she loved him. However, their "happily ever after" was greatly interrupted, when Saul decided to attempt to kill David by stealth. Michal found out about this plan, and quickly urged David to leave. Because Saul had watchmen set up by David's home, Michal had to let David down through a window, so that he could escape. And then, she covered for him for as long as she could, pretending that he was sick in bed, which gave David enough time to escape. And that is the last time, David and Michal see each other! In fact, the next thing we are told, is that Saul gave Michal in marriage, to another man (named Paltiel), while David was a fugitive on the run.

And so, brethren, several years have since past; a lot of history has unfolded (David is about 37 now), since he last saw Michal. And the last time he saw her (or at least interacted with her), was when he was hanging out of a window, with their hearts racing, as he was preparing to

flee from Saul! And now, as he is finally preparing to come to the throne, in accordance with God's promise (made many years ago), he orders Abner to return his wife to him. In fact, he says, "Look, I am ready and willing to make a covenant with you, but know for certain, that you will not even see my face; you will gain no audience with me, unless Michal is returned to me, as she is my wife by right."

And apparently, Abner, incapable of granting this request on his own, encourages David to take this up, directly with Ishbosheth (the king, and Michal's brother), and then Abner could influence things from there. Notice, we are told in verse 14, "So David sent messengers to *Ishbosheth*, Saul's son, saying, 'Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.'"

And so, David tells Ishbosheth to return his wife to him. One might begin to grow curious here, thinking, "After all of these years, she has been remarried (for much longer than she was married to David), David has six wives...why in the world would he do this at this point? Why not let her go at this point; consider the marriage null and void, as the covenant of marriage was clearly broken? She has settled down with her present husband for several years now...do you really want to push this issue, David? Yes, you paid the dowry; yes, she rightfully belonged to you, and was unjustly taken away from you, but why not just let it go at this point?" And I believe that those would be valid questions. And brethren, unwilling to believe for a moment that David had ill or selfish intentions here [such as, this could grant David favor with the Benjamites--which it could, or David just wanted to spite Saul for his unrighteous act, in taking Michal from David...etc], I can only deduce one possible reason, for why David did this. And it really isn't that complicated. David never forgot about Michal, and he never stopped loving her. She was his first wife, and first love, and he had given his heart to her, in a way that he had not done to any of his other wives. In fact, perhaps if he had been able to keep Michal, he might not have married anyone else. Well, that is just speculation, but needless to say, he still thought of her; he still missed her; he still loved her, and the way in which he was torn away from her, left a void or a sense of incompleteness in his heart. And so, he wanted her back. Whether or not this was a good decision is certainly debatable, at the least.

And so, we are told in verse 15, "And Ishbosheth sent and took her from her husband, from Paltiel the son of Laish."

A knock came upon Paltiel's door, and the wife whom he came to love so dearly, was immediately taken away from him. Now, assuming that he had to know from the beginning that Michal had originally belonged to David, in a very real sense, we might not feel sorry for him. However, we can also assume that he was manipulated by the deceptive Saul, as well, and so we might scratch out a strand of pity for him, especially since they had been together for several years now. But those who take what belongs to someone else, even at the hands of a king, should be ever prepared for the possibility of losing what was taken, to its rightful owner. Had Paltiel known of Michal's situation, he ought to have turned down the marriage, right from the outset.

"Then her husband [Paltiel] went along with her to Bahurim, weeping behind her" (vs. 16a).

Paltiel follows her, as she is taken to Abner, who will prepare to take her with him to David. Obviously in love with his wife, he is grieved over the situation, and he follows behind, finding it impossible to let her go. He is weeping the whole way, and then they reach Abner.

"So Abner said to him, 'Go, return!' And he returned" (vs. 16b).

"Scat, go back to your home, and stop following her." Clearly, Abner was a bit aggressive in his tone, not wanting anything to stand in the way of the covenant he was about to make with David. And clearly, Paltiel did not want to test Abner, by remaining, lest he wind up headless or slain, in some respect. And so, Paltiel stops following Michal, and heads back home.

II. Closing Thoughts and Applications

Having looked at our text for this morning, brethren, let us then close by considering a few relevant thoughts and applications for us.

1) Brethren, it is a wonderful thing to consider how the deeds of the righteous, often ripple over, into successive generations. Is it not amazing to consider how imperfect, and yet dear and faithful men (and women) of God, such as Charles Spurgeon and John Calvin and John Owen and Nancy Judson and so many others, though now dead, still speak to us, and influence the church of Christ today? We could list all of the faithful biblical characters as well, can we not; a Daniel and a Joseph and a David...etc, still serve as means of grace, do they not? The Lord Jesus, speaking of Mary (the sister of Martha and Lazarus), told how her loving act of breaking open her costly perfume and using it on Jesus, would be memorialized throughout all

generations. And today, we find the event recorded in three of the four Gospels, and our hearts, covet such a faithful and committed heart, and we strive unto it!

But brethren, sadly, this multi-generational ripple affect, is not limited to the deeds of the righteous, is it? There are two harvests, which serve to affect future generations, are there not? And so, for our first application, I want us to consider how the deeds of the wicked can ripple beyond their years, marring and affecting those who live beyond their time. Look at the disastrous *present* affects of the now deceased Saul's, past wickedness. In Saul's former jealousy and wicked madness, not only did he bargain with his daughter Michal's life, hoping that David would die, when seeking to obtain the dowry price for his daughter's hand in marriage, but after giving her in marriage to David, he chased him away in his jealous rage, and unlawfully gave Michal away in marriage to another man. And what were the affects of this, on Michal, on David and on Paltiel? What kind of horrible mental and emotional abuse was cast upon Michal, because of her father's madness and treachery? To be given in marriage to David, whom she loved, then torn away from David, then unlawfully given away in marriage to another man, only to now, several years later, after adjusting to this other man, be returned to David. All of this ruin and hardship for what? Because of one man's selfish and wicked designs. And what of David? Six wives later, still holding some affection for Michal, his first love and wife, now to be reconciled to Michal, after the deep and painful wedge, driven between them, has been removed. And their relationship is never the same. We will see, in a short time, that Michal comes to despise David, and she mocks him, and winds up childless for the remainder of her life! And then there is Paltiel. Again, without justifying his original consent to marry Michal, we find him here, a weepy mess, barren of the wife he had come to love and cherish.

Again brethren, see our present actions as seeds unto future blossoms or weeds. By our present decisions, we are sowing a harvest beyond our years. Now, we all desperately need grace, and we all desperately need to be regular in our prayer closets, but consider the harvest that you are presently planting. You can sow seeds today, which can be used to bring about much good or bad fruit, even beyond your years. Sow to the Spirit! Take risks! Make sacrifices unto the glory of Christ! Consider the big picture and not merely the short term benefits of your decisions. Consider the spiritual and not merely the physical. For todays sufferings and sacrifices and inconveniences can be tomorrows fruit! And todays comforts and eases and prosperities can be tomorrows corruption! God is good, and all is working out unto His glory,

but I would much rather be a positive blessing; a faithful tool in the pocket of Christ, than the cause of stumbling for my children and others. Abide in Christ, brethren, and you will bear much fruit, beyond your years!

2) Earlier, we had broached the question, "Should David have sought the return of Michal?" And there are probably mixed, good answers to this question. Politically, it would have been a good move, in earning favor with Benjamin, and still showing his respect for Saul's house. Emotionally, it may have satisfied David's longings, concerning the void that was left behind, when he had to quickly run away from his first love. No doubt, the "What if" scars stayed with David, all the time he was away from Michal. Negatively, so much time had past and taking Michal back, would inevitably come with a heap of emotional baggage. After all, Michal was just married to a man for several years, and the last time they were together, David was not accompanied by six other wives. The damper in their relationship to this end, along with the grief carried by Michal, for all of her dead family members (four brothers and her father), will be evidenced later on.

Well, in all of this brethren, I would think that we would all have to be understanding and yet concerned at the same time. But most of all, it ought to drive us to prayer...constant, regular prayer. If I have learned anything throughout the life of David, and everyone else in Scripture, I have learned (not mastered, but learned, in some respect) that I need to be a man of prayer. I am a desperate person, battling against all manner of possibilities, within and without, and if God doesn't carry me through this mess, I am in deep trouble! The world, the flesh and the devil are far, far, far too powerful for me. In short, I will ruin everything! Brethren, let me let you in on a little secret, but don't tell anyone. My biggest challenge in ministry---people say, "Wow, it must be hard...all those people, problems, marriage issues, sins in the body...etc"---brethren, my biggest challenge in ministry, and my greatest fear, is "me!"

And as we have looked at our text, recalling David's heart, all along, and how he always sought the Lord, I can't help but wonder if he sought the Lord here? We are just not told, and maybe he did, but suffice it to say, that we need to be a people of prayer, and I can never stress that enough, if I stressed it in every single sermon, preached from this pulpit!

3) Lastly, let me make a pictorial comment about Paltiel. Certainly, we can speak of his unwise consent to marry Michal, and the consequences of such a decision. And we can apply that to us, as well. And I think we have done this, at least in some brief sense. But I want to tap

into his sense of regret here, for a moment, and I want to carry it over to us, as a visual picture of sorts.

If you are an unbeliever this morning; if you are not a Christian; if you have not repented of your sins and turned to Jesus Christ for forgiveness and reconciliation with God, take a look at Paltiel's regret here, with me, for a few moments. Notice, Paltiel took what was not his to take; he took another man's wife, and he possessed what he had taken, for a relatively lengthy period of time---several years. And he loved what was not his to love. And ultimately, suddenly, without warning, it was taken away from him. And though he wept and followed it for a short time, he could not retrieve it. And he was cast away in his sorrow. The thing that he loved, which he ought not to have loved, was taken away from him, and finally, he was devastated.

Friends, what is it that separates you from your God? Is it not your sin? You want to do the things that you know God hates (sexual immorality, pursuit of the world, coveting, lying, stealing, drugs, worldly popularity...etc); you don't want to submit yourself to the authority and reign of Christ, and so you pursue these other interests. And though they don't ultimately satisfy you (they cannot, because only God can), you run after them, and you cherish them, as you obtain them. But these things are not meant to carry your affections. Even non-sinful things, which you are permitted to enjoy, are not meant to be the object of your affections. They are unlawful to you, in this respect. But you must know that there will come a time, not that far away, when all of these temporal things, and all of your sins, which once offered you some temporal, shallow form of comfort, will be taken away from you forever. You see, you cannot take anything beyond the grave. And you will weep after them, realizing that they are no longer within your reach. And you will be cast away from them, and judged for your unlawful idolatry of them. Friends, all of these things are temporary distractions, keeping you from seeing your desperate need of the one thing, the One Person, who can satisfy the soul's deepest need, and that is Christ! You need Christ! Young people, you need Christ! Flee the things of this world, confess and turn away from your sins, and pursue Christ! In Him is abundant life! "Why not give up what you cannot keep, to gain what you cannot lose" (Jim Elliot).

[Note: Christ's rightful bride is taken from the enemy and brought back to Him!]

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Ephesians 3:14-21