

Examining the Nature of Man

Text: II Samuel 16; II Samuel 17:1-23; Psalm 3

The nature of man outside of Christ can be a very ugly thing. In our next portion of Scripture in the study of the life of David, we will see the nature of man that is subtle and wicked. First of all, it needs to be pointed out that the Gospel changes everything. The life of Christ in us is our motivation. Colossians 1:27: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." But it needs to be understood, although we are saved by the grace of God, there remains a continuing battle because of the nature of man is still with the believer until we get to Heaven. Until then, we need to nurture the new man until full deliverance comes. I John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I Peter 3:3, 4a: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible." II Corinthians 4:16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. Romans 7:22: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."

In the next few verses, we will pull the cover back from the nature of man, so that those of you who are not in the family God will see there is better life than that which is portrayed in the next passage of Scripture. Then, hopefully, those of us who know Christ will not think that just because we are saved we are fully delivered from what the Bible calls the besetting sins. Hebrews 12:1: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

I. THE GREED INSTINCT

II Samuel 16:1-4

Ziba appears to be a good guy. He was the man that alerted David to the whereabouts of Mephibosheth, when David longed to bring favor to any of the household of Saul for Jonathan's sake. David assigns the servant Ziba and his family to take care of Mephibosheth from this point onward. He still appears to be such a caring nice person after Mephibosheth is given the inheritance that he lost when the house of Saul was dissolved and replaced by the house of David. David is now in a most vulnerable place--fleeing from his son who wants to assassinate him. If ever David needed friends, it's now. Ziba attempts to take advantage of the king when he is down. He leaves the crippled Mephibosheth in Jerusalem, empties Mephibosheth's cupboards and meets David with this horn of plenty, explaining that Mephibosheth is a traitor and David's real friend is himself. David inquires of Ziba in II Samuel 16:2a: "...What meanest thou...?" What Ziba means to do is to steal the inheritance David granted to Mephibosheth. Ziba's greed and avarice is off the proverbial charts. Herein surfaces the ugly side of human nature. Many times human nature will do anything to gain financial

freedom and even financial superiority. I Timothy 6:9, 10: “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

II. THE BULLY INSTINCT

II Samuel 16:5-14

Shimei sees David and his company vacating to safety and he begins to curse without restraint. He even goes so far as to throw stones and dirt at David and his loyal men. So this man of the house of Benjamin, probably a distant kin to Saul, takes the form of a cruel bully. Like most bullies, these are people of low self-esteem that try to elevate themselves by inventing the persona of a tough guy. In truth, Shimei is weak. He is an opportunist.

II Samuel 16:9: “Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.” David’s response is most touching: II Samuel 16:10: “And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David....” David is understanding. Numbers 32:23b: “...behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.” Galatians 6:7: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” David doesn’t respond to the bully.

It is interesting to note that there are three lies Shimei told on David: (1) Shimei accuses David of idolatry: II Samuel 16:7b: “...thou man of Belial...” (2) Shimei accuses David of stealing the throne of Saul: II Samuel 16:8 “The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned....” (3) Shimei accuses David of being a criminal: II Samuel 16:8b: “...thou art taken in thy mischief....” A person who is a bully is living a lie; he either tells the lie to justify his wicked deeds or, he is trying to be someone important when he knows deep down in his heart he feels so unimportant. He is trying to bring himself from zero to hero and he doesn’t care how many lies he has to live or tell to become that perceived ideal.

III. THE VENGEANCE INSTINCT

II Samuel 16:20-II Samuel 17:4

Ahithophel gives the advice to Absalom to bring David’s harem to the roof of the palace and defile himself and the concubines. This was a custom in those days and in this place to take the harem of the king who has been conquered. But there is something even more sinister in this action. Remember, Bathsheba was Ahithophel’s granddaughter. David’s sin began on the rooftop and that’s where Ahithophel tells Absalom to begin.

Ahithophel gets very personal in this vendetta as we observe: II Samuel 17:1b, 2: “...I will arise and pursue after David this night: And I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only.” Ahithophel

takes pleasure in finding David helpless, defenseless and afraid. Yet, he doesn't stop there; he wants to personally take the life of David himself. This smacks of a hateful vengeance. Romans 12:19: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

IV. THE EGOCENTRIC INSTINCT

II Samuel 16:15-19; II Samuel 16:23; II Samuel 17:23

Absalom is overwhelmed that David's most loyal man would abdicate for him. This feeds Absalom's egocentricity so well, that he dumps the advice of the most respected counselor in the land to patronize David's former close friend.

Likewise Ahithophel's advice rejected was taken personally and in deep depression, he takes his own life.

Conclusion:

II Peter 1:4: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Through the new birth we have received the righteousness of God. The Divine nature is ours by the gift of salvation. Let us therefore be willing participants of moving past the spectator world of Christianity to becoming partakers of Christ's Divine nature.

-Pastor Pope-