

# Preparation Time is not Wasted Time

## I. INTRO

- A. As a culture, we love shortcuts → shortcuts to fame, to power, to success, to avoid work, to make life easier
- B. The problem is that shortcuts, although effective, don't really help you to develop as a person (this is the danger of when technology goes from tool to master)
  - 1. Ex: When I got my driver's license → mapquest → GPS → phone
  - 2. Ex: Spelling rules → red line → autocorrect → grammarly
  - 3. Ex: Bible → Study Bible → St. Google → ChatGPT
- C. There's nothing inherently evil about using your phone, grammarly, or ChatGPT, but it isn't going to make you resilient
- D. James 1:2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*
  - 1. Troubles → test your faith → grow your endurance → maturity
  - 2. No troubles → no testing → no endurance → not maturity
- E. The problem with troubles is that they are trouble. We want the world and we want it now, and in today's day of technological marvel, there's never been a greater temptation to embrace shortcuts
- F. But we need those delays in order to mold us, form us
- G. Preparation time is not wasted time.**
- H. In these next few chapters of 2 Samuel, God is continuing to build David as the future king, but it continues to take years. God is building his roots.
  - 1. God establishes His kingdom slowly and faithfully
  - 2. David refuses shortcuts. He stands with integrity and humility.
  - 3. The people around him, however, are looking for the short cut
  - 4. They try and take matters into their own hands and it always backfires.
  - 5. And there's no shortcuts in character development
- I. Let's see what we can learn from David's life and how he waits with integrity, how he grows in the trial b/c **Preparation time is not wasted time.**

- II. *2 Samuel 2:1–4 (ESV): After this David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." David said, "To which shall I go up?" He said, "To Hebron." So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household, and they lived in the towns of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.*

### A. David asks the LORD what to do.

- 1. Pillar of fire, pillar of smoke // following the Spirit is moment by moment, day by day. We don't just get marching orders and then never ask again
- 2. When facing a big decision — new job, school choice, moving, starting a relationship, humility asks: "Lord, what would You have me do?" instead of rushing ahead.

- a) God speaks through his Word, Spirit and the Church
  - b) What's he saying? Don't just trust your heart (deceitful)
- B. God sends him to Hebron, not Jerusalem — a smaller beginning, a slower growth. David's already waited 15 years... it will be another 7!
- C. God has a purpose in the patience b/c **preparation time is not wasted time.**
  - 1. This is teaching him the skills now that he will need one day
  - 2. God is working slow, deliberate preparation that will last
- D. For all of us, we want the "Kingdom" right away — the big stage, the big job, the big salary, but often, overnight success is crushing for you & doesn't develop character
  - 1. In the waiting at Hebron, God is building David's magisterial skills, preparing him for the future, and honing his integrity
  - 2. Integrity means being humble and faithful in Hebron while God prepares you for whatever is next.
- E. Jesus really models this in his life and ministry. Grew in wisdom and stature... humbled himself under earthly parents... anointed at his baptism... knows he is the king... knows what's best...refuses to take Satan's shortcut.

III. *2 Samuel 2:12–23, Meanwhile, Israel crowned Saul's remaining son as king.... One day[12] Abner (the general of Israel's army)...[went to Gibeon with the army.] [13] And Joab [David's general and his army] went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. And they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. [14] And Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men arise and compete before us." And Joab said, "Let them arise." [15] Then they arose and passed over by number, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. [16] And each caught his opponent by the head and thrust his sword in his opponent's side, so they fell down [dead] together. [17] And the battle was very fierce that day. And Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.*

*[18] And the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle. [19] And Asahel pursued Abner, and as he went, he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. [20] Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is it you, Asahel?" And he answered, "It is I." [21] Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men and take his spoil." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. [22] And Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face to your brother Joab?" [23] But he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the butt of his spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell there and died where he was. And all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still. (ESV)*

- A. If you look back at all your anger this past week, the stuff that wasn't b/c of injustice was largely b/c of your pride.
- B. James says in James 3: You want stuff, you don't get it, so you fight
- C. **Asahel had pride in his gifts, his strength**
  - 1. Although this started as a "game" and ended in death

2. The irony is that Asahel's speed became his downfall.
  3. Abner warns him twice, but his pride blinds him. Pride comes before the fall (into the butt of a spear here)
  - D. Pride in talents looks like relying on charm, intelligence, or athleticism without discipline or wisdom leads to shortcuts, but they don't develop character
    1. I never learned good study habits. I was a lazy student.
    2. Michael Jordan was cut from his HS team, but then had to learn discipline
    3. Ask any teacher or coach → skill only gets you so far. You need hardwork
  - E. Pride says, "I got this," but **preparation time is not wasted time**
    1. You need the discipline and forming of time to develop you
  - F. *The Bible says that Jesus was "made perfect" through suffering. This doesn't mean he was ever sinful or morally incomplete. Rather, by experiencing suffering and obedience in the fullest sense, he was brought to complete qualification as our high priest and savior—fully able to sympathize with us in every way, yet without sin.*
- IV. *2 Samuel 3:1 (ESV): There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.*
- A. The narrator explains: God is behind David's growth. 7 years!
  - B. Notice the imagery — David grew stronger and stronger. Not overnight, but over time. This is oak growth: steady, consistent, resilient.
  - C. Just like Jesus taught: the kingdom of God is like a mustard-seed...
- V. *2 Samuel 3:6–11 (ESV): While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul. Now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. And Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?" Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bosheth and said, "Am I a dog's head of Judah? To this day I keep showing steadfast love to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not given you into the hand of David, and yet you charge me today with a fault concerning a woman. God do so to Abner and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the LORD has sworn to him, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba." And Ish-bosheth could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.*
- A. No short cuts to power, Abner. Abner took pride in his position.
  - B. Worse, he started to believe his own press (as many foolishly do)
  - C. Pride comes before the fall, though, and once he comes face to face with his own mistakes, his world starts tumbling down
  - D. He shows himself to be opportunistic, shallow, arrogant, easily offended - a baby
  - E. Pride chases shortcuts for power; humility waits on God and submits to preparation
  - F. In his pride he goes over and tries to manipulate the situation with Israel
  - G. He figures, "I'm Abner! I'm untouchable!" Pride thinks it's untouchable... until it's not...

H. He Abner... remember Joab? Remember when you killed his brother?

VI. *2 Samuel 3:26–27 (ESV): When Joab came out from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah. But David did not know about it. And when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the stomach, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.*

*2 Samuel 3:28–29 (ESV): Afterward, when David heard of it, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever guiltless before the LORD for the blood of Abner the son of Ner. May it fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father's house, and may the house of Joab never be without one who has a discharge or who is leprous or who holds a spindle or who falls by the sword or who lacks bread!"*

- A. So long Abner.
- B. But Joab also isn't off the hook. He's doing the same thing. Joab kills Abner out of revenge.
- C. In his pride he thinks he can be Judge Dredd and take the law into his own hands
- D. The narrator clears David of guilt: "David did not know about it."
- E. David publicly mourns Abner to prove his integrity.
- F. David refuses shortcuts to the throne the same way that Jesus would refuse Satan's shortcut to glory
- G. Pride said, "I'll take matters into my own hands."
- H. But this temporary victory for Joab ends in calamity.
- I. Pride comes before the fall, Joab.
- J. While David is walking and waiting in integrity, learning to be a king above the fray, the men around him stand as terrible examples. What a contrast!

VII. *2 Samuel 4:5–8 (ESV): Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out, and about the heat of the day they came to the house of Ish-bosheth, as he was taking his noonday rest. And they came into the midst of the house as if to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. When they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and put him to death and beheaded him. They took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night and brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron. And they said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring."*

- A. They murdered Ish-bosheth, expecting David's approval.
- B. They cloaked their sin in spiritual language: "The LORD has avenged you."
- C. But David condemned them: humility refuses shortcuts; pride justifies them.
- D. Rechab and Baanah were hoping to manipulate the situation. They wanted power without character (as so many do!)
- E. They wanted impact without discipline (as so many do!)
- F. They wanted to get payday without putting in the work (as so many do!)

VIII. *Read 2 Samuel 4:9–12 (ESV): But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity, when one told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing*

*good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I now require his blood at your hand and destroy you from the earth?" And David commanded his young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hanged them beside the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.*

- A. David rejects their "shortcut"
- B. The throne comes by God's hand, not murder.
- C. We rationalize compromise: "God will understand — I'm doing it for good reasons."
  - 1. But God isn't only concerned that you "get there," but how.

**D. Preparation time isn't wasted time.**

IX. CONCLUSION:

- A. Abraham tried to rush the Lord's timing
- B. Joseph tried to rush the Lord's timing
- C. Moses tried to rush the Lord's timing
- D. David is a good example of trusting God in the waiting room
- E. Jesus is the ultimate picture of this
- F. Oaks vs. weeds
  - 1. 20 years before white oak produces acorns
  - 2. 50 years before red oak produces acorns
  - 3. Roots go wide before the branches even push out
  - 4. Compare that to weeds... here today, gone tomorrow
- G. God has a purpose in his timing
  - 1. You may not like it. You may not want it. When you rush it, you cut yourself short.
- H. Go back to *James 1:2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*
  - 1. **Trust God's** timing in the waiting room → God does know what he's doing!
  - 2. **Embrace joy** in what God is doing in the waiting room → Think about all that God is orchestrating on your behalf that you can't even see!
  - 3. **Grow** (don't be lazy or sedentary) in the waiting room → faithful in little, faithful in much. Simple obedience comes before radical obedience.
  - 4. **Preparation time isn't wasted time.**