

# No Short-Cuts (2 Sam 14)

## I. INTRO

- A. Acts 1 & being above your paygrade // Jesus commands the impossible
- B. When you know you can't do something, it forces you to think differently
  - 1. In your HUMILITY, you seek help. You cry out to God, you ask the Holy Spirit to assemble a team, and you acknowledge your need
- C. When you think you can do something, you do the opposite
  - 1. In your PRIDE, you plan, you craft, you control, you manipulate → you scheme
- D. Now, I can just ask AI. I can ask AI to do something I can't do, write something I can't write, or answer something I don't understand and it can do it – on a doctoral level – in seconds.
  - 1. I don't have to research. I don't have to read a bunch of books or blogs. I don't have to know what I am talking about. AI can do it for me.
- E. This week AI was all on the news (coincidentally)
  - 1. Last week → top country song on charts
  - 2. This week → top two Christian songs & top album
    - a) One artist, Forrest Frank, accurately pointed out. "AI doesn't have the holy Spirit so it's really weird to open up your spirit to something that has no spirit."
  - 3. 2wai → a new AI app where you can upload videos and photos to make an AI avatar of your deceased loved one you can facetime with
    - a) In my opinion, this is basically divination → seeking spiritual counsel from something other than God's Spirit
- F. I am not saying that all AI is all bad. I do think it's a tool that you can use (like the internet or your iPhone), but I think you should be aware
  - 1. There's no short-cut to seeking God's Spirit**
  - 2. AI's power is manufactured, not manifest. AI can solve math equations and give pre-packaged advice, but God can command a whale to swallow a prophet or preach through a donkey
  - 3. There's no substitute for the power of God**
- G. In this passage today, we see the contrast between when God does confronts someone and they seek him in response (Nathan and David) and when man manipulates it with his own skill and insight
  - 1. Is the passage about AI and the Church? No, but I think it's relevant
  - 2. And to answer the question, no AI was used in the writing of this sermon

## II. 2 SAMUEL 14

- A. *[1] Now Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart went out to Absalom. [2] And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, "Pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning garments. Do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead. [3] Go to the king and speak thus to him." So Joab put the words in her mouth.*

1. Absalom murdered the heir to the throne, Amnon, as wicked as he was
2. Absalom is currently living in Geshur, approximately 136 miles away by modern roads on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, the Golan Heights.
3. But Joab sees this as a problem, not a temporary solution. Why?
  - a) Joab is David's nephew
  - b) The firstborn heir is dead. The secondborn heir is absent. The thirdborn heir is a fugitive → these are dangerous days
  - c) Dangerous days for David means dangerous days to be Joab
  - d) Joab sees the threat → what will happen if David suddenly dies?
4. So, what does Joab do? He takes a page from two chapters ago and decides to see if he can duplicate what God did with Nathan
  - a) When David committed adultery and murder, God sent Nathan. God put words in Nathan's mouth. David repented. Maybe Joab can do the same thing...
5. Now, there's no hint of Joab seeking God. There's no clue to this being spirit-led. All we know is that Joab sees a situation and thinks he can engineer an outcome.
- 6. Joab doesn't ask God. He takes the short-cut. He starts scheming**
  - a) Scheming is when we use our wisdom and our resources to try and engineer our desired outcome
  - b) It's when we take the "Spirit" out of the work and we try and manufacture our will rather than God's will to be manifest
7. We scheme when we choose the role of God instead of talking to God → trusting our strategies more than His wisdom; our power over his power
8. Isn't this what so many do?
  - a) I need an example to prove this sermon point. Do I ask ChatGPT, or do I pray and say, "Lord, what will resonate with your ppl?"
  - b) Tension at work: Do you encourage Person X and Y to have an open conversation, or "try to help" playing "He said / She said"
  - c) When sad, do you mope, sigh, and moan passively around friends to be pursued, or do you communicate openly your struggles?
  - d) Do you broker backroom deals with empty promises and gossip, or do you operate in the light – above reproach?
- 9. In his pride, Joab skips seeking God and jumps straight to scheming with the wisdom of the world. Do you do the same?**

*B. [in NLT] 4 When the woman from Tekoa approached the king, she bowed with her face to the ground in deep respect and cried out, "O king! Help me!" 5 "What's the trouble?" the king asked. "Alas, I am a widow!" she replied. "My husband is dead. 6 My two sons had a fight out in the field. And since no one was there to stop it, one of them was killed. 7 Now the rest of the family is demanding, 'Let us have your son. We will execute him for murdering his brother. He doesn't deserve to inherit his family's property.' They want to extinguish the only coal I have left, and my husband's name and family will disappear from the*

*face of the earth.” 8 “Leave it to me,” the king told her. “Go home, and I’ll see to it that no one touches him.”*

1. Joab hires a crafty woman, a wise woman who tells a story...
2. She isn’t a prophetess. She isn’t a voice for the Lord. She’s an actress who is willing to play the part and manipulate for Joab.
3. During this conversation, she manufactures a fake story about her sons
4. The threat on Joab’s mind is revealed → he is concerned about the heir situation unfolding after David’s death
  - a) Now remember... 2 Sam 7... David was given an eternal promise
  - b) Does God need Joab’s help to see it through? I think not.
5. Since Joab doesn’t TRUST, he schemes
  - a) You’ll do the same, by the way if you don’t trust God’s promises (Ps 46:10 // “Stop striving and KNOW I am God”

*C. 9 “Oh, thank you, my lord the king,” the woman from Tekoa replied. “If you are criticized for helping me, let the blame fall on me and on my father’s house, and let the king and his throne be innocent.” 10 “If anyone objects,” the king said, “bring him to me. I can assure you he will never harm you again!” 11 Then she said, “Please swear to me by the Lord your God that you won’t let anyone take vengeance against my son. I want no more bloodshed.” “As surely as the Lord lives,” he replied, “not a hair on your son’s head will be disturbed!”*

1. She keeps going... If the king is criticized... I want no more bloodshed...
2. So David acquiesces to her request and even swears on a vow to the Lord. She’s setting him up.

*D. 12 “Please allow me to ask one more thing of my lord the king,” she said. “Go ahead and speak,” he responded. 13 She replied, “Why don’t you do as much for the people of God as you have promised to do for me? You have convicted yourself in making this decision, because you have refused to bring home your own banished son. 14 All of us must die eventually. Our lives are like water spilled out on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God does not just sweep life away; instead, he devises ways to bring us back when we have been separated from him.*

1. This is her argument: You are willing to be merciful to my [fake] son. You are willing to stand up for him. You are willing to absorb criticism. You are willing to stand in the way of those who would harm him as his defender. And you don’t even know my family!
2. Why won’t you do the same for yours?

*E. 15 “I have come to plead with my lord the king because people have threatened me. I said to myself, ‘Perhaps the king will listen to me 16 and rescue us from those who would cut us off from the inheritance God has given us. 17 Yes, my lord the king will give us peace of mind again.’ I know that you are like an angel of God in discerning good from evil. May the Lord your God be with you.”*

1. Here we see what Joab is really worried about: “Those who would cut us off from the inheritance...”
2. She has set David up, put him publicly in a tight spot, stroked his ego...

F. 18 "I must know one thing," the king replied, "and tell me the truth." "Yes, my lord the king," she responded. 19 "Did Joab put you up to this?"

1. <gulp>

G. And the woman replied, "My lord the king, how can I deny it? Nobody can hide anything from you. Yes, Joab sent me and told me what to say. 20 He did it to place the matter before you in a different light. But you are as wise as an angel of God, and you understand everything that happens among us!"

1. David has been completely played by two masterful schemers
2. This isn't from the Lord. This is the result of human manipulation.
3. This is word-smithing to tug on emotional heartstrings
4. This is "Joab sent" "Joab put words in her mouth" instead of "God sent" and "God put words in Nathan's mouth"
5. And she plays the part – very well. She has David in knots publicly.
6. But here's the issue: There's no seeking God. There's no repentance. There's no prayer. There's no prophetic word. There's no POWER.

**7. When we scheme instead of seeking God, we rely on our skills instead of the power of God.**

8. Some of you use AI too much. You ask it for advice. You ask it for prayer. You ask it questions instead of turning to the Holy Spirit and the Word.
  - a) And then you trust what it says as if it were the very gospel of God all the while not stopping to think that it may be giving you catastrophic advice, unbiblical counsel, or... demonic insight
9. AI can write a better sermon than me. AI can defend the faith better than me. AI knows more scripture than I do. AI can give faster advice, logical counsel, and so much more. But it doesn't have the Holy Spirit.
  - a) Can God use AI? Sure if he wants
  - b) But we don't need more SKILL we need more POWER!
10. Hear me: giftedness and smooth communication aren't what change people; the power of God is what changes people.
  - a) Fog machines don't change people → The Holy Spirit does
  - b) Celeb pastors and worship teams don't change people → God does by his Spirit and his Word
11. So I ask: Have you skipped the power of God to be satisfied with a charade → like this woman from Tekoa? B/C much of the church has!
  - a) Have you sought the wisdom and power of God or settled for human wisdom, human advice, and human power?

H. **[Back to ESV]** [21] Then the king said to Joab, "Behold now, I grant this; go, bring back the young man Absalom." [22] And Joab fell on his face to the ground and paid homage and blessed the king. And Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord the king, in that the king has granted the request of his servant." [23] So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. [24] And the king said, "Let him dwell apart in his own house; **he is not to come into my presence.**" So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence.

1. Did it work? Did it function? All those skills and manipulation? No.
2. NO POWER. David never repented. David was cornered and gave in.
3. There's no real reconciliation → David said Absalom could move home but was forbidden from coming near to the king
4. Does that sound like the power of God? Repentance? It doesn't to me.

I. *[25] Now in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. [26] And when he cut the hair of his head (for at the end of every year he used to cut it; when it was heavy on him, he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the king's weight. [27] There were born to Absalom three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a beautiful woman. [28] So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, without coming into the king's presence. [29] Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but Joab would not come to him. And he sent a second time, but Joab would not come. [30] Then he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire. [31] Then Joab arose and went to Absalom at his house and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" [32] Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent word to you, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to ask, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still." Now therefore let me go into the presence of the king, and if there is guilt in me, let him put me to death.'" [33] Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.*

1. A handsome prince. Beautiful rock hair. And the guy's a total and complete privileged trainwreck. (Maybe we should give him a book deal)
  - a) This is what happens when you get away with murder → You think you can get away with anything
2. Backfires on Joab, doesn't it? Well, Absalom, the master manipulator, figures out how to get back in touch with the king.
3. He prays and asks the Lord to change his dad's heart, right?
4. Oh no? That's right, he throws a temper tantrum and burns Joab's field to get attention → "This is fine"
5. This is what happens when we plot and scheme, pushing forward on our own, instead of waiting on God's timing.

J. We end the chapter in a mess. Is it better or worse? Is this true reconciliation? True forgiveness? Is this the prodigal son returning?

1. No, all the scheming and false repentance will end in a kingdom at war

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. So what are we to learn from all this?
- B. Where is the David who sought the Lord before every battle? Where is the king who waited on the Lord's timing with Saul? Where is the shepherd boy who fixed his eyes on the horizon so he could awaken the dawn with his worship? Where is

the teen who believed God would fight his battles? He seems to be absent → and we feel it

1. Seeking God has been replaced with scheming
2. The power of God has been replaced with parlor tricks
3. Supplication has been replaced with short-cuts & spoiled princes

C. What about you? When faced with a difficult situation → do you...

1. Stop, seek God, pray, wait on the Lord?
2. Panic, and in your anxiety, run to quick fixes?
3. Plot and engineer how to solve the situation?
4. Run to AI, ask a lifeless machine, which might be a tool in the hand of the enemy, to tell you what to do? (I've done it before, but not any more)

D. Scheming, AI, the wisdom of the world, and all that stuff **looks** impressive, but it has **NO POWER** to do the work of God

1. Egypt and the Exodus → Ex 8:19 // The magicians could copy...
  - a) Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.
2. Jesus and demons → Luke 11:20 // Exorcists could copy
  - a) But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

E. I don't want to settle for brainstormed ideas and human wisdom; I want the power of God.

F. So what do we do?

1. All month, I have been asking people to pray and seek the Lord for wisdom, for discernment, for vision
2. We have one week left (unless the Lord shows otherwise)
3. I am asking that you take this final week to fast and seek the Lord.
  - a) Maybe fast technology ALL week
  - b) Maybe fast alcohol over the holidays
  - c) Maybe fast breakfast and lunch
  - d) That's between you and the LORD
  - e) You should still celebrate Thanksgiving (don't be that guy)
4. If the Lord reveals things to you → email me, share it. I will bring it to the elders and the Holy Spirit for prayer and discernment

G. *2 Chronicles 7:14, [14] if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

1. **Humble yourselves → fasting, acknowledging you (AI) can't do it**
2. **Pray and seek → Word and prayer, crying out to God!**
3. **Turn → confession (public and private)**
4. **POWER. Please, Lord, move.**