

Living in the In-Between

2 Samuel 19-20

I. Intro →

- A. There are plenty of things in my life that I wish would just go away or improve
 - 1. Struggles, temptations, weaknesses, etc.
 - 2. Sometimes, I think, “Bill, you should be done with this by now!”
 - 3. Other days, I think, “Bill, you will struggle with this until you die.”
 - 4. The truth is somewhere in the middle

B. How do we live in the in-between?

- C. If you are reading along with Revolve, you saw this tension clearly in Romans 6-8
 - 1. Paul summarizes it in **Romans 6**. We are dead to our old life, crucified with Christ, and we are also raised with him to life as a new creation.
 - 2. But let’s be honest... I’m not dead yet. And I am also not totally new yet.
 - 3. Spiritually, I am dead to sin. Spiritually, I am new, resurrected in Christ.
 - 4. But I am still **“stuck in this body of death”** as Paul says.
 - 5. I am somewhere in between... already crucified with Christ and seated in the heavenlies with him, but also not quite there yet... already... not yet...
- D. If we overemphasize either aspect of that truth, we teeter into a ditch
- E. If we over-realize our coming reality, we are tempted to act like “this life should be perfect // the kingdom has already arrived!” (not true)
 - 1. This can be seen in prosperity preaching and hyper-charismatic
- F. The other extreme is just as dangerous. If we under-realize our present reality, we feel humdrum and defeated, like spiritual Eeyore’s wondering, “what’s the point of trying?” (This is also not true)
- G. The position in between is often referred to as “already/not yet,” meaning:
 - 1. Promises started/inaugurated (Spirit, new cov life, kingdom breaking in)
 - 2. Full completion/consummation is future (resurrection bodies, final justice, new creation, no more tears or sickness).
- H. In 2 Samuel 19 and 20, we see the tension of living in the “already/not yet”
 - 1. Absalom is dead. The kingdom is David’s, yet the world remains fragile.
 - 2. These chapters sit in that tension, and the truth is that we, as believers living post-resurrection but pre-new heavens/new earth, live in the same tension.

3. The kingdom of God is inaugurated but not yet consummated.

II. 2 Sam 19:1-15

- A. Absalom has died; David mourns; the kingdom is technically restored.
- B. Restoration is not the same as stability.
 - 1. Joab and the troops are frustrated
 - 2. Tribal tensions persist (Judah vs. Israel)
 - 3. Old wounds are still raw
 - 4. David is stuck navigating kingly responsibility while grieving

5. Doesn't feel like the fairytale ending
 - C. Life under Christ is similar — the victory has been won, yet our world is still broken. (We mourn, but as a people with hope. We suffer, but we know future grace is coming. We have hopes and dreams, but they never seem to pass.)
 - D. You can have God's promises fulfilled and still feel emotionally undone
 1. This is where David's at, and it's where we live many days
 - E. **How do we live in the in-between? We mourn over sin & brokenness**
- III. 2 Samuel 19:16-23
- A. Shimei curses David, and David restrains immediate judgment.
 - B. Then Shimei comes crawling back, and David gives grace
 - C. David absorbs the insult instead of crushing the offender.
 - D. This is a great picture of the reality of life.
 1. You can be the king, anointed by God, but it doesn't mean the world will love you
 2. You can know all the deep things of the Spirit, and you can look at the struggles of the world and have true and genuine counsel that will CHANGE THEIR LIVES, but it doesn't mean they want to listen
 3. That was Shimei. And like David, you need to show the world grace
 - a) Grace when they curse. Grace when you're justified. Grace when they are wrong and you are right. Grace if they apologize (unlikely)
 - E. If we overemphasize "kingdom now," it can lead to impatience or frustration when the world resists God's rule.
 1. David could have been like Judge Dredd in this situation
 2. He could have let his hitman knock him down
 3. But that's not how David responds. He realizes that the kingdom is his, but it's a process of transition. It's already / not yet at peace
 - F. This is crucial for us b/c as believers, there is a temptation to get angry with a resistant world, but even David, although justified to kill Shimei, chooses love
 1. He understands the tension he's living in → already king, Not yet settled
 - G. Same for us: forgiven, still struggle; know the truth, people don't want to hear it; have hope, still get depressed; every reason to be thankful, don't feel it
 - H. **How do we live in the in-between? We show love & grace**
- IV. 2 Samuel 19:24-30
- A. When David returns to Jerusalem, you might expect celebration and unity.
 - B. Instead, he walks into drama because it's never as simple as "The crisis is over."
 - C. Yeah, the war is over, and the king is back, but hearts are still reeling, and tangled, and trust is fragile at best → already, not yet
 - D. David deals with Mephibosheth and Ziba, and the truth isn't clear.
 1. We want clean endings — heroes and villains neatly separated.
 2. But real life often isn't that simple.
 3. David makes a decision that feels imperfect. Who was actually lying? Not full justice, not total clarity, maybe just the best path toward peace.
 4. Doesn't this typify life? You plan, you prepare, you do all the right stuff, and the end result is "meh."

5. So many times I have prayed, "Lord just make it a really clear yes or a really clear no, but don't give me three 'meh' options."
 - a) What do you get? Three meh options
6. This is the age in which we live, an age of imperfect restoration
- E. **How do we live in the in-between? We embrace the best path forward BY FAITH when things are unclear, avoiding analysis paralysis**
- V. 2 Samuel 19:40-43
 - A. Can you imagine if this were how LOTR ended?
 - B. Right after this, Israel and Judah argue over dubs
 - C. The king is restored... and the people are still divided.
 - D. Because even redeemed people still fight pride and insecurity.
 - E. The kingdom is restored, but the people are still being restored.
 - F. Isn't this our lives? Can't a bunch of forgiven people just get along? Do we really need church splits, mission agency splits, broken marriages, etc? Among Christians?
 - G. Life is messy. Jesus has restored our relationship with God, but we are still being restored to the image of Jesus → works in progress (Phil 1:6)
- VI. 2 Samuel 20:1-2
 - A. You would think after Absalom, everyone would say, "Okay, let's never do that again." But sin doesn't really learn its lesson; it just waits for the next opportunity.
 - B. There's barely time to breathe before another rebellion appears.
 1. That's how brokenness works. You deal with one crisis, and another is already forming somewhere else.
 - C. Sheba's rebellion reminds us that external victory does not equal internal transformation. You can remove a bad leader, end a war, or solve a major crisis, and still not solve the deeper problem of the human heart.
 1. Israel didn't just have an Absalom problem. They had a sin problem.
- VII. 2 Samuel 20:3-15
 - A. Joab is a complicated dude. He is effective. He is decisive. He gets results. But he often operates with brutal pragmatism.
 1. Yes it's true that leaders need to make hard calls, but Joab also shows us how easy it is to value results over righteousness & speed over wisdom
 - B. And right in the middle of all of that chaos, you get this unnamed wise woman from Abel. No title. No army. No Instagram followers. But she brings wisdom
 - C. The king is back, but the kingdom isn't stable
 1. David has authority, but he can't control hearts
 2. He can sit on the throne, but he cannot force loyalty
 3. That has always been true of God's kingdom. God rules, but He does not coerce love. He reigns, but people still choose rebellion.
 - D. **How do we live in the in-between? We build and protect the kingdom with wisdom.**
- VIII. Already / Not Yet // **How do we live in the in-between?**
 - A. David sits on the throne again. The kingdom is his. And yet —
 1. There is grief. There is division. There is rebellion. There is work to do.

- B. That is where we live. Christ is risen. Christ is reigning. Christ has sent His Spirit. And yet —
1. We still fight sin. We still bury people we love. We still live in a world that resists God. We still have disagreements about “how” we should love God, love people, and make disciples
 2. Romans 6 reminds us that we live in this tension and need to “consider ourselves dead to sin and alive in Christ” → strive to think that way
 3. Paul reminds us in **Eph 1** that we are currently seated in heaven... so think that way and live like that
- C. We are already justified and fit for the kingdom spiritually, but still living here in Cape May County... So what do we do in the meantime? We live like citizens of a kingdom that is **real — but not complete yet**.
1. We forgive when it would be easier to crush (Shimei)
 2. We reconcile when it would be easier to divide
 3. The answer isn't always perfect or clear (Ziba and Mephibosheth)
 4. We stay faithful when it would be easier to quit.
 5. We will hope when it would be easier to despair.
 6. We fight against sin today b/c that's not who we are anymore
- D. One day, the “not yet” will disappear. One day it will all have arrived, a full, visible, unshakable kingdom of Christ.
- E. Until then, Paul's advice is to live a life of faith, hope, and love
1. **Faith** is the foundation of our salvation, of our death to sin and life in Christ → the inauguration of the kingdom
 2. **Hope** is what we are looking forward to → consummation of the kingdom
 3. **Love** is how we live in the waiting room → love God, love one another, love our neighbor
- F. Acts 1 → **How do we live in the in-between?**
1. IRAN? End of the world!? Just go and make disciples.
 - a) Mourn for sin and brokenness while demonstrating and declaring the Good News of a better king
 - b) Show love and grace to your enemies while demonstrating and declaring the Good News of a better king
 - c) Embrace the best path forward without getting trapped in analysis paralysis while demonstrating and declaring the Good News of a better king
 - d) Build and protect the kingdom of God while demonstrating and declaring the Good News of a better king
- G. The King is already on the throne, and He is coming to finish what He started... just maybe not today.**
- H. So in the meantime, keep the faith, cling to hope, and love God and people until the whole world hears.**