

## 2 Samuel 15 - |The dangers of overlooking sin

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[0:00] This morning's reading is 2 Samuel chapter 15 and it's 319 in the church Bible. In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.

He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, What town are you from? He would answer, Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel. Then Absalom would say to him, Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you. And Absalom would add, If only I were appointed judge in the land, then everyone who has a complaint or case would come to me and I would see that they receive justice.

Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. Absalom behaved in this way towards all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice.

And so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel. At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, Let me go to Hebron and fulfil a vow I made to the Lord.

[1:28] While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow. If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron. The king said to him, Go in peace.

So he went to Hebron. Then Absalom sent secret messages throughout the tribes of Israel to say, As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, Absalom is king in Hebron.

Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had invited his guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter. While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel, the Gilonite, David's counsellor to come from Gilo, his hometown.

And so the conspiracy gained strength and Absalom's following kept on increasing. A messenger came and told David, The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom.

And then David said to all his officials who are with him in Jerusalem, Come, we must flee or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin on us and put the city to the sword.

[2:43] The king's officials answered him, Your servants are ready to do whatever your lord the king chooses. The king set out with his entire household following him, but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace.

So the king set out with all the people following him and they halted at the edge of the city. All his men marched past him along with all the Kirithites and Pelithites and all the 600 Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath, marched before the king.

The king said to Ittai, the Gittite, Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland.

You came only yesterday and today. Shall I make you wander about with us when I do not know where I am going? Go back and take your people with you. May the Lord show you kindness and faithfulness.

But Ittai replied to the king, As surely as the Lord lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be.

[3:50] David said to Ittai, Go ahead, march on. So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him. The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by.

The king also crossed the Kidron Valley and all the people moved on towards the wilderness. Zadok was there too and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the Ark of the Covenant of

God.

They set down the Ark of God and Abithah offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city. Then the king said to Zadok, Take the Ark of God back into the city.

If I find favour in the Lord's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says I am not pleased with you, then I am ready.

Let him do to me whatever seems good to him. The king also said to Zadok, the priest, Do you understand? Go back to the city with my blessing. Take your son, Ahemaz, with you and also Abithah's son, Jonathan.

[4:52] You and Abithah return with your two sons. I will wait at the fords in the wilderness until the word comes from you to inform me. So Zadok and Abithah took the Ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

But David continued to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up.

Now David had been told Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. So David prayed, Lord, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness.

When David arrived at the summit where people used to worship God, Bishai the Archite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head. David said to him, If you go with me, you will be a burden to me.

But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, Your Majesty, I will be your servant. I was not your father's servant. I was your father's servant in the past, but now I'll be your servant.

[5:53] Then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice. Won't the priest Zadok and Abithah be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace. Their two sons, Ahemaz, son of Zadok, and Jonathan, son of Abithah, were there with them.

Send them to me with anything you hear. So Hushai, David's confidant, arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.

This is the reading of the Lord's word. Good morning, church. I really picked an interesting text. Usually when I go to places, I don't pick text as complicated as this. But we're in for a treat. It should be fun, by God's grace.

But yeah, in order for us to ever get anything out of this, in order for us to understand it, in order for us, yeah, for our eyes to see Jesus more clearly, we need God's help. And on that note, let's come to the Lord in prayer.

[6:53] Let's pray. Father in heaven, unless you give us ears to hear and eyes to see, we will never receive anything from your word.

Father, we need you to meet with us. We need your spirit to empower us. We need your spirit to give us ears that would hear, eyes that would see, hearts that would receive.

Father, we need you now more than ever, we need you. And Father, we pray that by your spirit, you would meet with us today. We say that by your spirit, we would see Jesus more clearly today.

And that we would love our Savior all the more for all that he has done. Thank you, Father, for your work. And I pray that you would be with us now. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. In the second year of university, if you're a student, that was at least, oh, it's about 15, almost 15 years ago now, wow. You tend to have to find accommodation. When you get to the second year of university, you stop living on campus, you go and find accommodation. And I remember looking for accommodation with several of my friends.

[8:12] And we looked at all these different houses. And I won't get into the hows and whys, but at some point, we ended up in a very, very, very terrible house. We got the last pick and we ended up in a bad house.

And we spoke to the estate agent and he gave us all of these assurances that everything, don't worry, all these little issues, they'll be fixed. There was many issues, but he said they'll be fixed, they'll be fixed.

And so when we first moved in, he sent over one guy who functioned as the electrician, the plumber, the painter, the garden mower, all sorts.

Like this guy was the fixer. And his job was he was given one week's worth of pay just to fix everything he could. And so, of course, we had more than a week's worth of issues.

That was the problem. And so after that week was done, none of our issues were getting fixed anymore. And that proved problematic. So no matter how much we complained and how much we raised issues, they just wouldn't get fixed.

[9:10] And all of those assurances that we were initially given just fell flat. None of them really got dealt with. And as you can imagine, things that don't get attended to, especially when they're problematic, they tend to just get worse over time.

And so there was one particular issue, and I remember it clear as day. In our upstairs bathroom, there was all of these black spots on the ceiling.

And like we raised issues. We said, ah, guys, I think there's a mold issue in the house. Can we need to get this sorted? We need a vent. There's no vent here. There's no nothing. And they were like, listen, it's on you. You just need to keep the windows open.

Cool. We kept the windows open forever. We never closed those windows. Within a few months, that ceiling was pitch black. The ceiling was initially white.

It became pitch black. Like you couldn't see. It was dark. Like very, very dark. And you would have thought we painted it black. And we essentially spoke to the guys and we're like, listen, this needs to be sorted.

[10:09] But yeah, it was just a very sad situation to be in. I only ever used the downstairs bathroom. But for those who were using the upstairs bathroom, it was a sad situation to be in.

And if you're sitting there and you're thinking to yourself, oh man, I feel sorry for those five guys that were just living under the tyranny of a bad estate agent. You should be feeling sorry for us.

I agree with you. But there is something there I say much worse than living under the tyranny of a bad estate agent. There is something much worse.

In this particular text that we're reading right now, it's not just a house that's a mess. The whole kingdom is in ruins. The whole kingdom of Israel is in ruins.

And I guess as you're trying to think through this text and as we're trying to understand this text, the real question before us is, how did they get into this situation? How did you get into a situation where your king is being run out of town, where he's having to go hiding up on top of a mountain, where somebody is coming in, where his own son has taken the kingdom from him?

[11:13] How do you get to a situation like that? How did you get to a situation like that?

How did you get to a situation like that?

How did you get here? Now, in order to do this, as long as 2 Samuel 15 was, actually, I was going to ask to read 2 Samuel 14 as well, but I was scared. So what I'm going to do, I'm just going to walk us through it high level, what's happened ahead of time.

But the Bible is clear. The reason that Israel actually finds themselves in this position is because David himself as a person has overlooked sin. Or in other words, put differently, David was passive. The reason Israel was in disarray was because David had neglected his God-given duties as king. What good is a king who doesn't enforce justice or uphold righteousness, who hears of sin spreading but doesn't fix things?

[12:58] And to make the case, what I want to do, I want us to consider the context or the backdrop for this chapter. Right? Because most of us will know, in the book of Samuel, initially there was a very bad king.

His name was Saul. He was the king of the people's choosing. And actually, Saul was bad for many reasons. And so, God chooses a king after his own heart.

He chooses David, this shepherd king. The one who was meant to teach people what God's king ought to look like. The one of God's choosing. And so he brings forth this king who is meant to be great and glorious and humble and a righteous figure.

And he's meant to lead God's people and be a blessing to God's people and feed God's people.

And even though David starts off well, eventually David falls into sin. And he takes a woman named Bathsheba from her husband.

And he murders her husband by Joab's hand. And at the end of that chapter, what you realize is very clearly, even though David has done everything to cover it up, the Bible says God is not pleased.

[14:04] They're the final words. And so God, next chapter, sends Nathan the prophet to confront David. And he tells him four things. One, your son will die. Two, the sword won't depart from your house.

Three, evil will rise up from within your own house. And four, you will be publicly shamed because you did the secret thing with Bathsheba. And so, as Nathan had prophesied, things played out perfectly.

David's son dies. But they're more relevant to our text today. David's home, his children, they're a mess. They're an absolute mess. And sorry in advance if this is triggering, but David's oldest son, it begins with David's oldest son sexually assaulting David's daughter.

And yet David does nothing. Then what happens thereafter is that David's other son takes justice into his own hands and he murders his older brother, the heir to the throne, and runs away.

And again, when the Bible paints the picture, the striking thing in that narrative is that David does nothing. In fact, actually the Bible talks about David missing the son that ran away.

[15:24] David's not thinking about justice. David is passive. And so by the time we get to 2 Samuel 14, which is the chapter before the chapter today, it begins with the words that the king's heart went out to Absalom.

David misses his son. And yet it ends that chapter, the words proceeding right before chapter 15, essentially saying, the king kissed Absalom.

And so the key question for us when we're looking at that text is to try and figure out, what did David compromise in order to get to this position? That's the question that the text is really trying to make you think through.

What did David compromise to get there? And David, three key answers from chapter 14. One, David overlooks the issue of murder. Joab knew that David missed Absalom.

And so what Joab does is he calls, he brings in a woman to come to David and he calls her to act as though her son has been killed. But, and that she's a widow, but he says that actually act as though your son has been killed by your other son.

[16:33] And so this woman comes, she's meant to be a wise woman in Israel. She comes to David and she starts saying all of these things and she brings this case before the king. And no, this woman is not looking for justice.

She wants the king to protect her son, the murderer, and she justifies it by saying, oh, listen, he's, he's the final heir of my late husband.

And even though my entire clan wants justice, she asked the king to bend justice for her sake. And so the question, after posing that question to David, in chapter 14, verse 11, it says, then please let the king invoke the Lord your God, the avenger of blood, the avenger of blood, kill no more, and my son be not destroyed.

And he said, being David, as the Lord lives, not one hair on your son should fall to the ground. And listen, friends, I have, you've seen, I have quite a few small kids.

I know kids play fight. Kids play fight. That's what they do. They like to, especially the boys, they like to play fight. They just, you hear the sounds and all that kind of stuff. It's fine. This is not little kids play fighting.

[17:45] This situation here is a man consumed with rage after quarrelling with his brother, killing him in cold blood.

And the clan, the clan of people, they're outraged because they know what God's law says. They say, you know, an eye for an eye or Leviticus 24, Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 19.

All of them talk about how murder deserves, is a capital offense and deserves death, the death penalty. And David, you're this person who's meant to execute justice.

That's your job. We're no longer in the book of Judges, which comes before Samuel, where everybody does what is right in their own eyes. That's constantly the refrain of the book of Judges. Samuel fixes that issue.

God installs a king. David, your role, your actual job description, your JD, is to make sure that God's justice is executed. That people don't do what is right in their own eyes, people do what is right in God's eyes.

[18:45] That's fundamental. Nevertheless, David says in this situation, not one hair on your son's head, the murderer, should be touched. Do you see the discrepancy here?

In fact, David goes as far as to threaten anybody who dare touch that son. David bends justice for this woman. David overlooks the issue of murder.

That's number one. Number two, David overlooks the issue of deceit. Joab and this woman essentially have conspired to bring back a murderer. And in order to do that, they deceive the king. That's their plan. And so the woman appears before David and she lies to him. And the Bible says that Joab put the words in her mouth. So collectively, they have lied to the king. And they tell this sob story to get the king to downplay murder.

And when David eventually realizes, what does he do? He doesn't hold Joab or the woman to account. Instead, the king grants their request.

[19:47] He brings back Absalom, a fugitive, the man who's deserving of death, who's on the run. He brings him back into the camp. David overlooks their deceit.

And the reason he does it is because it suits him. He missed his son. And so rather than punishing Absalom, rather than punishing, not just Absalom, rather than punishing Joab or the wise woman for their bad behavior, instead he rewards them and grants their request.

And it's shocking. It's so shocking that by the time you get to chapter 14, verse 22, Joab, he himself is shocked. He's like, he might as well have said, man, I'm favored by the king.

He's taken this very well. I've just lied to him and he's found me out and I'm not dead. Like, Joab himself is shocked at how the king has responded.

Because he knows to conspire against the king in such a way is tantamount in some senses to treason. It's a coup, right? Nevertheless, he answered his request.

[20:56] Absalom isn't charged for his crime. He's brought back. And therefore, David overlooks deceit. But then the third thing that David overlooks in the trio is David overlooks the issue of unrepentance.

You see, when Absalom comes back, Absalom is the same wicked man that left. Absalom hasn't changed. And so after two years, when he returns to Israel, he's not allowed to see the king.

And so Absalom's first thing is, why haven't I seen the king yet? As though that were his right. And he thinks that even though he has slaughtered the king's oldest son, the heir to the throne, he thinks he has a right to see the king.

A man who has just conducted an act of premeditated murder. And so what he does is he tries to get an audience with the king. But it's not happening. And so he sends a message to Joab.

He says, Joab, I need an audience with the king. Joab doesn't respond, right? He's not picked up his, he's not checked his iPhone or whatever it might have been. He's not responding to this man. And so he says, okay, fine.

[22:04] You know, Joab's not responding to me. He says to one of his servants, come, come, come, come. Go and burn Joab's field for me. To get his attention. And so he burns Joab's field.

And then when Joab comes over and says, what are you doing? He says, ah, I needed your attention. I needed you to answer to get me an audience with the king. And so the man, so accustomed to wickedness, has come back from exile and is burning people's fields just to get attention.

So that he can see the king because he thinks he deserves to be back in royalty. This is not the heart of a man who's been broken over the sin that he's done for the last two years. This is a man who murdered his own brother in cold blood and he's not repentant in the slightest.

It's the heart of a man who doesn't care. And yet worse still, the other problem here is that David himself also doesn't care about the state of this man's heart. He's burning fields.

He hates the fact that the king has brought him back but not restored him to royalty. He challenges the king, by the way, by saying, listen, if I'm guilty, then kill me. Otherwise, let me see the king.

[23:17] And what happens after all of this? David gives him an audience and restores him to royalty. And so the last four words of this chapter, chapter 14, ought to be chilling when it says, the king kissed Absalom.

David looks wickedness in the face and made peace with it. David made peace with an unrepentant man. And so what did David compromise in order to get his estranged son back?

He overlooks murder. He overlooks deceit. And he overlooks the issue of unrepentance.

Unrepentance. Now, church, before we move on to the impact, let me just say this.

Let it never be said of the church. Let it never be said of Stolper Baptist Church, but also let it never be said of West Kilburn Baptist. That we're the type of church to be overlooking issues of unrepentance and sin in the life of the church.

Let it never be said of Stolper Baptist Church. Let it never be said that we would justify fits of rage and hatred in the life of the church as though that's not the root of murder. Or let it not be said that this church just ignores the issues of lying and deceit because it's no big thing.

[24:33] Let it never be said that we're people who don't care for the truth as though the truth hasn't set us free. Let it never be said that we're the type of people who ignore the unrepentant heart.

As though Hebrews 3 verses 12 to 13 doesn't say, take care brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God. Or exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The Bible says the woman who lied to David was a wise woman. But just because someone, quote unquote, godly, finds a way to justify their actions doesn't necessarily make the action godly.

That's what we see in the text. It can still be foolish, deceitful, sinful. And we have to deal with that lest there be in any of us an evil, unbelieving heart. And so yes, church, we bear with one another in love.

You know, I can hear it. But where's grace? Where's grace? You bear with one another in love. But faithful are the wounds of a friend. And if your brother or sister is unrepentant in sin, i.e. they're unwilling to put it to death, and they are unwilling to bring it to the foot of the cross, then overlooking sin in that instance isn't an act of grace.

[25:54] It's dangerous in the life of the church. Because when sin goes undealt with at any level, you actually risk creating absalons in the context of church life.

And that means what you'll end up with is children of Satan getting comfortable in the house of God. And if your concern is to be loving, then let me tell you, there's nothing loving about David's approach.

There's nothing loving about looking wickedness in the face and making peace with it. There's nothing loving about inviting that in and kissing it. Church, the loving thing to do to that someone in that moment is to encourage them not to overlook their sin, for that's to spare the rod and to spoil the child.

No, the right thing to do in that moment is to call them to repentance. And if they don't listen, the Bible has given, God has given his church the power to do church discipline for a reason.

Right? It's a function and it's an act of mercy because you're calling somebody to repentance collectively as a church. That's what you're doing. You're asking someone to put away their sin for the sake of Christ.

[26:58] And so because the issue is church, that when we overlook sin, we make light of sin. And we don't deal with it because we're uncomfortable and we think it condemns us and we think it's not loving.

When we do that, it has serious consequences. And that brings us to point number two. What was the effect? What was the effect or the impact of sin that is not dealt with? In chapter 14, it's all about how Absalom essentially gets his way back into the camp.

Whereas chapter 15 shows us how that plays out. Now we're at our text. Great. It shows us how it plays out. Absalom leads this huge conspiracy, right?

To steal the throne from David. That's what he's doing at the start of the chapter. And the people essentially follow Absalom in droves. And eventually it gets to the point where David has to escape from Jerusalem, right?

The roles have been completely reversed. Prior, David was the king and Absalom was this fugitive on the run. Now, all of a sudden, things have been completely reversed. David, the king, has now become a fugitive.

[28:10] Absalom, the fugitive, has now become king. Right? Because David is now convinced that if he's to stay, his son will kill him. There is

loads here that we could say about this.

But I just want to hone in on three particular ways that tolerating sin, not upholding righteousness within the camp, how that affects the nation as a whole. Three ways. One, it normalizes ungodliness.

Like I said, it was the wise woman and Joab who plotted to bring a murderer back into Jerusalem. It was the wise woman of Israel who thought it was a smart thing to deceive the king.

That's the wisdom of Israel. It was King David's judgment call that there were times when a murderer could just go free. That's your king who's meant to execute justice.

Absalom burns a field with no repercussions. Instead, he's kissed and embraced by the king. When we normalize ungodliness, what can you really be surprised then that when Absalom, the murderer, attempts to steal the throne from the king, so many people follow after him.

[29:24] You have to appreciate what's happening. The nation follows Absalom. Absalom. He's growing. The Bible says the conspiracy grew strong and the people with Absalom kept increasing.

That's what it says in the text. It became normal. Right? If you went online, it would have said hashtag reject King David. Right?

At that point, it was normalized to reject the king because they had normalized evil. Church, when sin goes unchecked in the life of the church, we normalize ungodliness and we bring down the standard of righteousness.

You know, for example, I don't know if you have quite a few young couples here in the church. We have quite a few young couples in Stockholm. And I know that's something you see quite commonly is that when people get married nowadays, the trend is to have white houses.

Like everything just white on the inside. They'll go for white walls and then they'll get white furniture and then they'll get white carpet. And then the thing is, after some time, they get kids who like colors.

[30:38] And those kids who like colors and who get messy hands get those colors and those messy hands on your white walls, on your white furniture and on your white carpet.

And, you know, you start off by doing the hard work. You think, OK, we bought all of these products from TikTok. Let's wash this and let's get this painted. This paint is perfect.

Apparently, this paint just covers up all stains and we'll paint this and we'll do this. And you keep doing that bit by bit. But then at some point, like you get tired. Right?

Because the kids don't run out of energy, but you do. And so like it gets hard to keep cleaning up and cleaning up and washing and repainting. And every time the kids go to sleep, you repaint all the walls.

And every time they wake up, they mess them up again and you have to repaint them. At some point, you get tired. And so what happens is at some point, you just get used to the new normal. Like there's handprints all over the walls and there's this on the car and pen marks around.

[31:37] And do you know what? God blesses you with eyes. You just can't see it. Like you can't see the mess anymore. You can't see what they've done to the walls. And you're no longer phased.

And even if you do see it, you're just no longer phased by it. You're used to it. Right? It's your new normal. Friends, the issue is we can't let sin become the new normal in the life of the church.

You can't let sin become normal and you can't let it become something that you just, you get used to in the life of the church. Your friends are in a relationship with somebody and they're an unbeliever.

But you don't want to tell them to deal with it because actually it's awkward. So you just normalize it. Or you have a brother who you hear just cursing, cursing, cursing.

And you'll praise God on Sunday with his lips. But then throughout the week, his mouth is foul. And you don't know that he's going to take it well. And so you just laugh it off when he's cursing or when he says crude jokes.

[32:40] Or you have a saint that's always getting angry, always getting angry, always at the center of issues in the life of the church. And you don't want to address it because they're older. And you think, you know, they're older than me.

I don't have, there's no need to address it. And so you normalize things in the life of the church that are unhelpful. Friends, sin should never become normal in the life of the church. You lower the standard of righteousness.

And the impact of that is widespread. Right? The issue is, the Bible says a little leaven leavens the whole lump. But in 2 Samuel chapter 3, David actually curses Joab because Joab murders somebody.

In 2 Samuel 11, David goes on to then use Joab to murder somebody for him. By the time you get to 2 Samuel 13 to 14, in multiple situations, David is overlooking the issue of murder in the nation. And by the time you get to 2 Samuel chapter 15, our chapter now, you have the whole nation siding with a murderer. The sin that initially captured a single heart way over there eventually captures the whole nation.

[33:47] And so church, don't be surprised. Sin being deceitfully wicked, part of that is that it will end up making us normalize that which God hates. And if that's happening to a saint way over on that side of the church, don't think that because you're on this side of the church, it can't happen to you.

You'll be affected. The whole lump is leavened. Right? But, so number one, we normalize our godliness. But number two, the issue is we blaspheme God. You know, the third commandment is blasphemy.

Right? To take the Lord's name in vain. And that's much more than just misusing God's name in a sentence. It's to trivialize or associate the name of the holy God with that which is unholy.

And when the woman lies and brings her case, you see it, right? In chapter 14, verse 11, it says, then she said, please let the king invoke the Lord your God, that the avenger of blood, that the avenger of blood, kill no more, and that my son be not destroyed.

He said, being David, as the Lord lives, not one hair on your son should fall to the ground. While lies were still on her lips, she invokes God's name.

[34:59] While rejecting God's law, David invokes God's name. While she's flattering the king later on, she invokes God's name. And to top it all off, when Absalom, in chapter 15, goes and wants to carry out his conspiracy, he tells them, oh yeah, I just want to go make some offerings and some sacrifices to God down here.

He actually uses God's name and lies about God and his relationship with God just so that he can try and lead a coup to take over the kingdom.

Church, all of that is blasphemy. Whenever we trivialize God's name or swear by it or throw it out, and just because we're shocked or we're stressed, we're blaspheming.

Or when we're Christians, you think, oh, do you know what? I'm just, I've, I'm just going to do this wild stuff here. And then I'm going to say, oh yeah, but I'm blessed. Or, but praise God.

And throw that out to kind of put it as a bit of sprinkling on the issue. We're blaspheming. And whenever we, as ambassadors of Christ, those who have been sent by him and stamped by him, go out and in our lives live as children of Satan, we are blaspheming.

[36:12] Church, let me be clear. God's name is not some incantation, nor is the blood of the Son something that you plead over this and that. This is God. His glory is waiting.

It's not trivial. This God is holy. And those of us who bear the name of Jesus Christ, that's not a light thing. We ought to be careful what we associate with the holy God.

And in church, the worst thing that this can communicate to the world is that it tells unbelievers that you can masquerade as a child of God while living as a child of Satan. It gives the false assurance of heaven while people are still heading to hell.

And it says that the work of the Spirit is indistinguishable from the children of darkness. And friends, we have to be careful then not to blaspheme God.

Christian, you bear his name. And so when we overlook sin, we normalize it among ourselves. And guess what? We end up blaspheming God as a result. Because we're misrepresenting God and who he is.

[37:17] But thirdly and finally, sin is enthroned. David is removed from the throne and Absalom is made to reign. Sin reverses the order of God. Absalom, the fugitive, is king.

David, the king, is a fugitive. Sin is enthroned and God's lordship is challenged. Leadership is compromised. And this is not just one man's decision.

The people conspired. The nation decided that. When wickedness is kissed by the king and adored, eventually it becomes adored by the people. Sin is your lord.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump. And you might not think that's the case. You might still think that you're doing church. But that's a lie. David, at some point, when he's on the run, he sends the Ark of the Covenant in chapter 15 back to Jerusalem.

In other words, the Ark of the Covenant is God's presence. His resting place is present in Absalom's kingdom. They could still tell themselves that God was with them.

[38:23] And they could still tell themselves that they were God's people. And they could still tell themselves that God reigns. And yet no matter how much they worshipped God with their lips, their hearts were far from him.

They had enthroned a murderer. They had rejected God's king. And so don't mistake having God's altar for having God's presence. When you compromise and you don't deal with sin, it's sin that reigns in the life, not God.

And when we do that in church, it's sin that reigns in the church, not God. Church, who is enthroned in our lives? 1 Corinthians 6 verse 12, All things are lawful to me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

Left unchecked, sin will master you. Sin will reign sovereign. It's constantly competing to be on the throne in your life. And you can't make peace with sin when it's constantly waging war for your soul. Church, we can't make peace with sin when it's constantly waging war for the church. And so in the end, the final question now, what is the solution?

[39:33] Who will deal with sin? In the end, how does it play out in the text, right? David, sin has run rampant in the life of Israel.

David is hiding high up on a mountain, on the mountain of olives. And he's hiding for his dear life, right there on the mountain of olives. And he's waiting for a word, hoping that God will deliver him. The people have conspired against him. He's being betrayed by his own son. And initially, what began as spots of mold on the ceiling have now spread.

It's now complete and utter darkness. And David stands in the mountain of olives, and all he sees is pitch black. The writing is on the wall. It's a dark day.

He overlooked evil. He didn't administer justice. He swept sin under the carpet countless times. And now it's all red, it's ugly head. And they're wondering, what will happen to this, what will happen to the nation?

[40:40] The fact is, David's sin is dealing with him. How will David deal with sin? And the countless people who have run away with David, to be honest, they look at him, and they're weeping in the text.

They're weeping because it feels like there's no hope. And when you see the shadow of a king himself weeping over the situation, you struggle to turn to that man for rescue.

And when you think about all the people he's messed up, Uriah, Bathsheba, Joab, the nation, his own kids. Now even Absalom, this powerful man, is trying to kill him.

You think, what hope remains? And as mad as it is, in the text, verses 25 to 26, chapter 15, it says, Then the king said to Zadok, Carry the ark of God back to the city.

If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his dwelling place. But he says, But if he says, I have no pleasure in you, behold, here I am.

[41:41] Let him do to me what seems good to me. David doesn't even know whether God will save him. And so to be honest, the rise of Absalom, the instability of David's kingdom, his inability to address sin, it doesn't feel like there's any encouragement there.

And yet, dare I say, friends, I don't think we're meant to find our encouragement in David right there and then. I think we're meant to find our encouragement in the other man on the mountain. If you read on ahead in the story, you'll realize that there is another man on the mountain, on the mountain of olives.

And it's not just any old man. It's the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospels tell us that the people laid their cloaks and palm trees, and as Jesus descends from the mountain of olives, the people were

shouting, Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna to the Son of God. Hosanna in the highest. You see, friends, there is a second king on the mountain of olives. And the people were saying Hosanna because they are assured that he will save his people from their sins.

And this king won't overlook sins or just sweep it under the rug, letting it pull the wool over his eyes. No, no. Or letting it run rampant and just hoping that things will be dealt with. No, that's not the king we're hoping in.

[43:04] In the Gospel of Matthew, standing on the mountain of olives, he says that he's coming back. And he says nobody knows the time or the hour, but he's coming. And he says that when he comes, he will judge the living and the dead.

And he says that when he comes, he will judge the violent and the drunkard and the proud and the hateful and that sin won't go unpunished. And the king, this king, he's never going to get used to those messy walls or those rubbish carpets.

That's not what this king will do. He doesn't get accustomed with things stained by sin. He will never grow tired of administering justice. He will separate the sheep from the goat, the Bible says, when he's standing on that mountain.

And his verdict will be consistent with his character and eternally binding in nature. He won't let the unrepentant murderer run free like David did. He's the judge of all the earth.

He will do that which is right. And if that's not enough, the gospel tells us that just as this righteous king was standing on the mountain in a dark night, like David, he too was betrayed by someone close to him.

[44:08] And he was being hunted down by sinners, not because he failed to deal with his own sin. No, he's not like King David. He's on the mountain dripping sweats of blood because crying out to the father because he's getting ready to make an end of all of our sin once and for all.

Our sinless king was on the mountain of olives preparing to die on the cross to deal with our mess and our failings. And church, that's why we have hope.

Not because we're looking to David, but because we're looking to the one that David points to. It's the other man on the mountain. He deals with our sin. And even though the nights get dark and sin looks like it's on the throne, we can rest assured that Jesus Christ didn't stay in the grave.

Up from the grave, he arose. Three days later, he rises from the dead. And the Bible tells us that in the book of Acts, from that same mountain, he ascends back to his heavenly throne, claiming his rightful place as Lord of all because he alone successfully deals with sin.

And so church, let's not side with Absalom. Side with Christ, with the other man on the mountain. Be holy for your God is holy. Be righteous for your God is righteous.

[45:27] Faithfully deal with sin because your God has faithfully dealt with sin. And when all is said and done, thanks be to God. We don't have to trust in David. We put our trust in the other man on the mountain, Jesus Christ, our Lord and our King.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Let us pray. Amen. Our God and Father, thank you so, so, so much.

Thank you so much. Thank you, Lord. For you are kinder to us than we've ever deserved. Father, if you would count iniquities, who would stand?

And yet there's forgiveness with you that you might be feared. Father, thank you for sending the other man on the mountain that Jesus Christ would not cower in the face of sin, but that he would deal with it completely.

Thank you that though our sin be red like crimson, you have made it as white as snow. You have washed us and made us clean. You have purged us with hyssop. Father, you open our mouths that we might praise you.

[46:43] Father, thank you for your finished work on the cross. And Father, we pray that as a people, we will never grow accustomed to sin, but that we would be a people who would deal with it, knowing that our Lord has dealt with it.

There would be a people who would bring our sin to the foot of the cross, knowing that the sins we bring to the foot of the cross, you are faithful and just to cleanse us from. Father, thank you, Father,

for being a God who even though our sins are many, your mercy is more.  
It's because of your faithfulness that we are not consumed. Thank you, Father, for not changing.  
Thank you, Father, for being faithful. Thank you for binding us together by your spirit. Thank you, oh  
God, because in your kindness, you let us see the other man on the mountain so clearly and our  
need for him so clearly.  
Father, we pray that as your people, we would worship him, we would adore him, that we would put  
our trust in him and by your power, he would change us to live our righteous life. In Jesus' name,  
amen.  
Amen. Thank you. Thank you.