

Loyalty?

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Date: 23 July 2017

Preacher: Dan Calkins

[0:00] 2 Samuel chapter 16. This is the word of the Lord.

When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of donkeys saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

And the king said to Ziba, Why have you brought these? Ziba answered, The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink.

And the king said, And where is your master's son? Ziba said to the king, Behold, he remains in Jerusalem. For he said, Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father.

Then the king said to Ziba, Behold, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours. And Ziba said, I pay homage. Let me ever find favor in your sight, my lord the king.

[1:13] When king David came to Behurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gerah. And as he came, he cursed continually.

And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of king David, and at all the people and all the mighty men who were on his right hand and on his left. And Shimei said as he cursed, Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man.

The king has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. And the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom.

See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood. Then Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, came to the king. Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?

Let me go over and take off his head. But the king said, What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the Lord has said to him, Curse David, who then shall say, Why have you done so?

[2:24] And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, Behold, my own son seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjaminite leave him alone and let him curse, for the Lord has told him to?

It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today. So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went and threw stones at him and flung dust.

And the king and all the people who were with him arrived weary at the Jordan, and there he refreshed himself. Now Absalom and all the people of the men of Israel came to Jerusalem and to Hithophel with him.

And when Hushai, the archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, Long live the king! Long live the king! And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this your loyalty to your friend?

Why did you not go with your friend? And Hushai said to Absalom, No, for whom the Lord and his people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain.

[3:43] And again, whom should I serve? Should it not be his son? As I have served your father, so I will serve you. Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, Give your counsel.

What shall we do? Ahithophel said to Absalom, Go into your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened.

So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went into his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. Now in those days, the counsel of Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the word of God.

So was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom. Okay, this passage I've titled Loyalty.

It's, I'm going to present it in such a way as really kind of being a character study because there's a lot of different characters in here, and boy, they're characters. And they tie into the idea of loyalty.

[4:51] Now we've talked about this before in previous chapters, specifically chapter 9, which we're definitely remembering that from Ziba being in here.

But there is this covenant, this kindness. I used the Hebrew word *hesed* back at that time. And *hesed* is a word really for loyalty that is tied to a covenant, that's tied to, especially the Lord's covenant, the old covenant.

And so this is the idea of why David was kind to Mephibosheth. But you would imagine that he would be kind like that, I mean, if he's going to be kind like that to someone he didn't really know very well, which Mephibosheth, he didn't know very well.

Last time he saw him, he was probably a little kid, if even that. But you would think he would have been kind even to his mighty men, such as Uriah.

He was a mighty man. Think he'd be kind to Uriah? No, he killed Uriah, or had him killed. So this is an interesting idea. And so now we kind of see where this kindness thing and where this loyalty thing is going, because we see several people who you would imagine being Israelites, every one of the people named in this are Israelites.

[6:13] Well, except for one. We'll get to that. But anyway, just about everyone's an Israelite. And you would think, okay, they will honor the king. They've asked for a king.

They demanded a king. And you would think they would honor their king. But what happens? Okay, so I want to define loyalty before we dig into this passage. And I want to use a very simple definition that is found in Psalm 9.

In verse 1, Psalm 9 says, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart. So how do you give thanks? With your whole heart.

That is what loyalty really is in a nutshell. You know, the idea of with your entire being. The heart is the central command of ourselves in Scripture. It's not the lub-dub-lub-dub organ.

It is the central command. It's what is in control of everything. So when you love the Lord with all your heart, you are basically saying you love the Lord with your entire being.

[7:12] Soul, mind, and strength. That's actually implied in heart. So it's almost like you're being redundant when you say that. And you really mean it. And so this is the whole idea.

So with everything, without hypocrisy, without any pretense, you will love the Lord. You will give thanks to Him. That is what loyalty is about, what Psalm 9 is really talking about.

If you go on in Psalm 9, verse 1, it says, I will recount all of your wondrous deeds. We will give thanks to the Lord and be loyal to Him with a mind of understanding.

We will understand why we need to be loyal to the Lord as well. So we're not doing it mindlessly. Or we're also not doing it out of a sense of obligation.

Merely out of a sense of obligation or out of a sense of duty. Merely, that's the word there, key word. So we desire, we are truly thankful to give thanks to the Lord.

[8:10] We're truly thankful to give Him thanks. That's interesting. I will be glad and exult in you is what Psalm 9 says. So the idea of what is loyalty here, to be loyal, is to give yourself with all of yourself and with understanding and also without any hypocrisy or any pretense and not just by mere obligation.

This is something you want to do, you desire to do as well. So looking at these characters, what is the loyalty about? Well, we come to Ziba first.

And remember, Ziba was Saul's servant and he was put in charge of Mephibosheth when he was five years old. And after Saul and Jonathan and others died, they went to go hide Mephibosheth with the idea, well, he's part of the house of Saul.

He will be killed. And so that's what they did. And of course, Mephibosheth was crippled, really due to that hurrying of being hidden.

And so Ziba's loyalty, really, and you look at just chapter 16, if you know anything else about it, you think, okay, he's definitely a loyal guy.

[9:29] And he's, and you know, of course, David takes everything that he says at face value at this point and such. But when we learn later on in chapter 19, we'll come back to this passage or come back to the story.

And you're going to find out that everything's not really said. Quite properly. So this loyalty is pretend loyalty. It's feigned loyalty, pretend loyalty. So what do we see?

We see first a magnanimous gift in verse 1. You see what Ziba's bringing to David and to all his men, a couple of donkeys saddled, 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, summer fruits, skins of wine.

You know, all of these things to help out with their needs. Can you imagine David and his men? They're out there in the wilderness. You know, they kind of had to hurry out. And they didn't really have much time to gather many things up.

And so you would imagine they needed this. It was a definite need. It was a thoughtful need, a well-needed gift, timely. And it also reminds us of something that we've read in the past, when Pastor Don was here, 1 Samuel 25, when Abigail brought foodstuffs to David and to his men whenever they were out in the wilderness, and her husband cursed them.

[10 : 53] And we were reminded of that as well later on too. And so this gift, but David recognizes something. Who's Ziba?

Well, Ziba is given to be Mephibosheth's servant. Ziba's a powerful man, has all kinds of servants as well, some land. But everything that is Ziba's is really to serve Mephibosheth, you know, to take care of himself too, of course.

Of course, that would be helping to serve Mephibosheth because it needs to be taken care of. But so David's asking a couple questions. So I'm calling this mistrustful grilling. Grilling is kind of an overstated term.

But he's asking some questions. First question, he says right there in verse 2, why have you brought these? Well, that's an interesting question.

Of course, there's a lot of questions that are not being asked in that question. I mean, that's just at face value. Why have you brought these? But you can tell there are some other questions that are in there.

[11 : 52] Well, if you see Ziba's answer, he answered it at face value. He told him why he brought these, and this is what all these things are for. Well, I think David could figure that out. But he was asking something in particular.

What was he asking? Well, the second question he said, where is your master's son? You know, where's Mephibosheth?

Where is he in all of this? Is he supporting this? Is he, you know, what's going on here? Does he know about this gift that you're bringing? What's going on here?

And this is when this guy says what he says about Mephibosheth. And then that's where we get our third point from this pretend loyalty. Mephibosheth gouged. Mephibosheth is just simply swindled out of everything.

Why? Well, because Ziba lies about it. He's deceiving about the situation. He's throwing Mephibosheth under the bus, so to speak.

[12 : 52] And David, without really any proper judgment, I mean, as a judge, we've talked about this before already in the previous time, you know, judges don't make rash decisions.

A good judge, a good judge hears all sides and makes it after hearing everything that needs to be heard. Has he heard everything that needs to be heard? Well, there's no way.

Mephibosheth isn't even there. So David is very much making a rash decision. And because of that rash decision, Mephibosheth is swindled out of his property at this point, loses everything.

He doesn't have any clue if Mephibosheth is loyal or not. But he takes Ziba's word at face value. It's an interesting thing, too, looking at this passage, not just the Mephibosheth part, but even after that. There has to be something in David's mind going on of, okay, I'm about to lose this kingdom to my son. And something very similar happened, you know, when he became king with the house of Saul.

[13 : 58] And as David's house grew, the house of Saul shrank. As Absalom's house is growing, David's house is kind of currently shrinking as well.

Maybe there could be a rise of the house of Saul. And, you know, there's a lot of things that could be going on there. So who knows? There could be other things thought of there.

And all of a sudden, David is no longer trusting that situation. That's also what happens when you are in sin. You get to the point of not trusting things that really could be trusted.

Okay, and then you find this guy here. And he is, you know, considered to be a worthless man. And he's considered to be just kind of a rough guy.

And if you take his word as face value, what I just described is King David. No, this is Shimei. And Shimei has zero loyalty.

[15:01] And that's an understatement. He has absolutely no loyalty at all. Not even a hint. And you find this with his ferocious rampage. He's cursing. He's throwing stones.

He's flinging dust. He's a madman. And what's he saying? Well, I'll tell you first before we talk about what he's saying. What he's doing is completely uncalled for, by the way.

He's judging David. He's not in a place, in a position to do that. One, David's the king. He's not. And so that's already part of it there, too. But there are already places, positions, that are used to be advisory and are used to bring things to David, even rebukes.

A prophet is to do that. And we saw that in Nathan in chapter 12. A priest could potentially do that kind of thing if they are bold. A counselor, really, they're paid to do that kind of thing.

They need to be honest with their king. And, of course, a judge as well. Of course, David being the ultimate judge of this land. So, Shimei is none of those. He's just some regular guy.

[16:07] He's a distant relative of Saul. And he obviously has a vendetta. And also, his beliefs, as you see what he's saying, they're not necessarily based in a firm view of reality, you might say.

It's his own view of reality. And I want to give an illustration to this. I was watching a movie with Sarah this last week called Rosenstrasse.

It's a World War II movie. It was a German movie. Everything was in German, English subtitles. And it was about a group of ladies in Berlin who were married to Jewish men.

Aryan women, Jewish men. And the Jewish men were taken from the homes and placed in a center. And, of course, there was the whole rumors they were to be shipped off east.

As they said several times, but concentration camp, as we know. And the ladies just simply stood on that street. It was Rosenstrasse Street. And they stood in protest for, like, two weeks.

[17:10] I mean, this is a true story. But, anyway, that's kind of a sub-story to this. There's one family who's a very powerful family.

This man's a baron, so the whole baron's family. And the daughter of the baron's husband is Jewish. And also in this detention facility. And they are shown pictures of her brother fought in Russia and lost his leg as an officer.

And he took pictures of just terrible situations that are happening with Russian Jews. What the Germans did to Russian Jews. And just showed, you know, dead bodies everywhere.

That kind of situation. And the father, the baron, basically said, oh, all of that is propaganda from London.

I don't believe it. It's propaganda from London. Now, that's just his view of what he considers to be truth. He looks at that. He denies its existence. Or at least overplays it.

[18:23] And it's not as big of a deal. And so this is kind of a situation here. He's overplaying this decision. He's overplaying his belief.

Who knows from talking with other people. You know, he saw Saul die. He saw Jonathan die. Or at least heard about it. Abner died. Ishbosheth died.

All these people in the house of Saul died. They were killed. Even murdered. A couple of them were. And he saw all these things. And what's he doing?

He's pointing it all back to David. Because David's the guy that became the king. And so what does he say? He says in verse 7 or verse 8, The Lord has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul.

So what does that mean? Saul, Jonathan, all of Saul's sons, Ishbosheth, Abner, all of that, it's your fault. It's all your fault. And the only one we could even tie to David in a very indirect way is Abner.

[19:28] Because the guy who killed Abner, David's allowing to stay alive and command his army. So that's the only thing we can even tie to. It's just not based in reality.

However, there's a fragment of reality here though. And what is that? Verse 7, Get out you man of blood.

Is David a man of blood? He definitely is a man of blood. Now he's a man of war and that's why he wasn't allowed to build that temple.

One reason. But he had Uriah the Hittite murdered. Now his commander is still alive and well and doing well.

He deserves to be dead too. Yeah, he's a man of blood. And that's the reality and David knows that. And so it comes to Abishai.

[20 : 25] Abishai being Job's brother. He kind of in some way second to command of sorts to the army, to the mighty men. And he has loyalty.

He really does. But it's misapplied loyalty. Because what does he ask? Why should this dead dog curse the Lord my king? I can just take him down right now.

I can take him out of the way. He's annoying us. Just let me get rid of him. Snuff him out. And you know what? He was saying things that I think a lot of people would be snuffing him out.

I think a lot of people would be willing to do that. I mean, just look at the way it was worded. King David was coming with all his people, the mighty men on his right hand and on his left hand. I mean, they had everything they could do.

I mean, this guy was even understanding that he could be snuffed out. It kind of would prove his point, though. You know, he's calling David a man of blood. And David's like, yeah, go ahead and kill him.

[21 : 25] Okay, well, he'd be a man of blood. He's still a man of blood. He's not even a repentant man of blood. And he at least has that going for him. So here's Abishai in a position where, you know, if David allowed him to do that, he'd be proven Shemai right.

And so, but David is correcting him. He's trusting in the providence of God. Why?

Well, he knows he's guilty. He knows he's being disciplined. He knows this is part of the discipline of God. This has been prophesied, or things like this have been prophesied through the prophet Nathan in chapter 12, that these things would happen, that there would be this major discipline that would go on, that his family would betray him.

And it would continue on, and we'll get there. He also recognizes something, too, in verse 11 and 12.

Behold, my own son seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite. You know, my son doesn't really have a great reason to seek my life.

[22 : 39] This Benjamite, especially the way he thinks of things, he kind of does. So leave him alone. In verse 12, it may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today.

Now we need to recognize if, you know, David, what some of the things that David's saying about Shimei's wording is kind of more tied to a prophet, prophecy type thing.

And there's, if you get something wrong in your prophecy, you're a false prophet. That's the way the Bible declares it all over. And Deuteronomy 13 is quite clear.

If you're a false prophet, declared a false prophet, you're executed for that. And so, okay, that could be one thing that could come back. Let's give it time, see if it's true.

Also something else we can learn from this as well. You see that in verse 12. The Lord will, and maybe the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today.

[23 : 54] He will look on this done wrong and repay me with good. That's something that we need to think about in our lives as well. And how we deal with other people. And this is David showing in a very positive, very mature way of how to deal with this guy, even though he's deserving something different.

There may be people we run across that are deserving something different. But we are to treat them in a way that honors the Lord. It says in Romans 12, verses 16 through 21, And if possible, so far as depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. For it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For by doing so, you will heap burning coals on his head. And then to wrap it up, do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

And that's what we're called to do as believers with dealings with other people. Don't take vengeance on yourself. That is God's work.

[25 : 23] That is God's job. And it was then too. And David knows that. And that's how he handled that situation. Even though, man, he didn't just throw rocks and fling dust and curse for just a few minutes.

It was several miles. Took him all the way to the Jordan River. All the way to the Jordan. And finally he went away. So there you go.

It took a lot of patience. A lot of long suffering. But I think he taught us a lesson. He taught us mighty men a lesson too.

Then we come to something that we have already looked at last time in chapter 15. We'll continue to look at through these chapters. Betrayed loyalty. Ahithophel, Absalom, and everyone else that's in this group.

Because there's a lot. And it is a slippery slope as we learn when you come to a point of betraying someone. You come to a point of, especially someone as powerful as David.

[26 : 28] Or perhaps even Judas with Jesus. Or in our history, Benedict Arnold. I mean, you get to the point where, you know, there's just no turning back.

And you just keep going down and down that until you're pretty much ruined as well. And this is what's going on here.

So it just continues the slippery slope. Verse 15. Absalom is stealing the throne. He's coming from Hebron. They were in Hebron the previous chapter.

He was crowned king in Hebron. And so they were coming up from Hebron to Jerusalem. And they are taking the throne. And Ahithophel is with him.

A powerful counselor that we talked about earlier. And also the last verse of this chapter talks about. And so he's taking the throne.

[27 : 24] And then if you skip down to verse 20. He's declaring war. Now, it doesn't say that declaring war. You have to look in the next chapter to actually see the start of the war.

But, you know, when you go into your father's house. And you take his concubines. And you sit on that throne. And you take over. And while he's still alive.

There's got to be something to pay for that. I mean, that's definitely war right there. What does that mean? David's considered as good as dead.

In the eyes of Absalom. In the eyes of Ahithophel. Well, David's considered as good as dead. We can just take over. He's out of the way. He's not dead yet. But he will be soon. Also, too.

Even more importantly. It's fulfilling prophecy. Go back to 2 Samuel 12. When Nathan confronted David with his sin. It said in verse 11. Thus says the Lord.

[28 : 25] Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes. And give them to your neighbor. And he shall lie with all your wives.

Well, he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this son. It's not all of them. But there are ten concubines here. And so, what does it say? In verse 22. They pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof.

And Absalom went into his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. I mean, that's almost exact what Nathan the prophet said. And then not to mention this.

I mean, you may think. Okay, well, I remember talking about Ahithophel earlier. And he was Bathsheba's grandfather. And, you know, he had a reason to hold a grudge. He really did. However, he's not just betraying David.

He's betraying God. Not just because David's the rightful king. But also, it's betrayal of God's law. He's already counseled Absalom to fulfill this sexual immorality.

[29 : 28] And to turn this whole thing into, you know, just a terrible place. Like prostitutes and such. So, you know, sex with the concubines.

That is not in God's law. Well, concubines isn't in God's law. Well, anyway, that's another issue.

But, I mean, come on. Anything outside of the bonds of marriage. That is definitely sin.

And so, betrayal all over. And then we see true loyalty in two different characters here. First of all, Hushai. Now, I talked about all these guys are Israelites except for one.

Hushai is not an Israelite. Hushai is a Gentile. He came from a Gentile community. But he's a very trustworthy person. And considered to be David's friend.

And he's got a job now. It's a job we talked about the last chapter. He is to be a spy. He is to spy on Absalom.

[30 : 30] He is to report to David for what's going on. And that is, and he's really showing true loyalty and will show and prove to be loyal to David by the time all is said and done.

But to Absalom at this point, he's really being ambiguous. Because at this point, you know, he comes to Absalom. He says there, verse 16, long live the king.

Long live the king. Well, who's the king? Who's your king? Even Absalom asks that question, too, if you notice that. You know, is this loyalty to your friend?

Why did you not go with your friend? It's like, why are you even here? This is a surprise. I didn't expect you at all. You've got to remember, Hushai is a trusted advisor. If I hit the fellows number one, which I think there's quite a bit of proof to that, you know, at least in the eyes of David, Hushai would be number two.

It even says so much in 1 Chronicles. It puts both those guys together as high counselors within his administration. And so Hushai has this job, and he lets Absalom know what's going on.

[31:43] And it says, no, for whom the Lord and his people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be. You know, so I will be where the Lord is.

I will be where his people follow him, you know, so long as the people are following the Lord, of course. You know, he will be there. Well, here's what's going on. In the last chapter, you found out that the high priests are going to go back to Jerusalem.

And they're also to be spies, too. Hushai, a very solid counselor, is to go to Jerusalem. You know, it's starting to look like to Absalom, even to Ahithophel, as you notice in some of his counsel, that maybe God could potentially be in this, pushing David out and putting Absalom in.

He's got all the right people coming along and on his side and such. So, what wonderful allies that he has.

But he does turn to Ahithophel, doesn't immediately put all of his trust in Hushai. Ahithophel's still number one and asks what to do. And, of course, he told him what to do.

[32:53] And we'll continue to in the next chapter. And then David, he's being loyal here, too, as you saw back there in verse 11 and 12.

But also, just looking at the Psalms that are written about the same time as this period, you will see some major loyalty to his Lord, to his Master.

He trusted in God's discipline. He trusted in God's timing. He trusted in his protection. He trusted in him for everything. In Psalm 3, this psalm was written about the same time period, about the time when David had to flee Jerusalem.

He says, O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me. Many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God. But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory and the lifter of my head.

I cry aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. I lay down and slept. I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.

[34:05] I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God.

For you strike all my enemies on the cheek. You break the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Lord, your blessing be on your people.

Salah. Thank you.