



## CELL GUIDE

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**TOPIC** The Spirit of Absalom

**SPEAKER** Ps Darren Kuek

**THEME** Be Alert and Vigilant

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# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever suffered any injustice, struggled with the decisions made by people in authority (e.g. church leaders, superiors in the workplace or parents) or rebelled against them? An example of this can be found in 2 Samuel 13-15. Through these chapters, we learn about the Spirit of Absalom and how Absalom's suffering of injustice for his sister caused him to rebel against King David and eventually incur the judgement of God. We can also learn from Absalom's and other Biblical examples about how we should deal with injustice done by an authority figure.

## THE SPIRIT OF ABSALOM

### 1. Understanding the Spirit of Absalom

#### **Who is Absalom?**

Absalom was one of King David's sons. He had a sister, Tamar, and a half-brother, Amnon. Absalom was an attractive man who knew how to win the hearts of men. He was also a man of justice – when he saw that Tamar suffered an injustice that was not dealt with, he took matters into his own hands to right the wrong. This however meant that he sinned and rebelled against King David.

#### **How did the injustice start?**

In 2 Samuel 13:1-14, Amnon pretended to be ill and asked King David to let Tamar prepare some cakes for him so that he could eat from her hand. King David then sent Tamar to Amnon's house. Amnon's lust for his half-sister, Tamar, resulted in him violating her. Being deeply affected by it, Tamar lived as a desolate woman in Absalom's house. These caused Absalom to hate Amnon.

#### **Why did Absalom usurp the throne?**

Firstly, Absalom was angry that King David did not seek justice for Tamar. Although King David was furious after learning about Amnon's deed, he did not redress the wrong (2 Sam 13:21-22). Absalom had hoped that his father would seek justice for Tamar as he was indirectly responsible but King David's inaction caused Absalom's anger to grow while Amnon got away scot free.

Secondly, Absalom lost faith in King David's leadership. Absalom lost faith and trust in his father's leadership to correct injustices. Hence, Absalom allowed his anger to brew over two years and finally decided to take matters into his own hands by killing Amnon (2 Sam 13:23-29).

Out of fear after killing Amnon, Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, King of Geshur and stayed there for three years until King David asked him to return to Jerusalem. Upon his return, Absalom made plans to usurp the throne. He plotted to win the hearts of men by meeting with people at the city gates. He listened to their troubles and disputes and promised to get justice for them. Through this, Absalom became popular amongst the men of Israel as they felt that he could do a better job than King David (2 Sam 15:1-6).

The Spirit of Absalom refers to a person seducing the heart of others and usurping authority. In the case of Absalom, we see from the chapters that it was not birthed out of a greed for power. Rather, it was birthed from a grave injustice which led Absalom onto the path of sin.

## 2. How should we approach injustices? Are there exceptions?

We are all subject to the governing authorities and that everyone in authority is appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed and will incur God's judgement (Rom 13:1-2). Hosea 8:3-4 however draws our attention to the fact that there could be leaders who may not have been appointed by God. Hence, can we ever resist leadership?

We can, provided that it clearly goes against God's Word. For example, we cannot obey our leaders when their instructions cause us to sin. There are biblical examples to support this:

- Daniel's three friends were sent to the furnace as they were accused of disobedience for not bowing down to the statue of King Nebuchadnezzar. However, the three men were saved by God (Dan 3).
- Daniel disobeyed the law of the land. He prayed to God instead of to King Darius, resulting in him being thrown into the lions' den. God then sent an angel to save Daniel (Dan 6).
- Jesus' disciples were questioned by rulers, elders and teachers of the law as they disobeyed the orders not to preach in the name of Jesus. Eventually, the disciples were set free.

*We must* always remember that *God is sovereign* over un-consulted appointments and that *He is our Lord in all circumstances*. We should not be hasty to judge or claim that someone is not appointed by God even if we disagree with what he/she does. Remember that only God has the authority to judge if someone is appointed by Him. For instance, King Saul tried to kill David but David would not touch him as he knew that King Saul was the Lord's appointed. God can still use such authorities to fulfil His purposes in our lives.

## CONCLUSION

Ephesians 4:26-31 states that we should not sin even in anger for it gives the devil a foothold and grieves the Holy Spirit. *We should not take the path of Absalom and sin against God even if we suffer any injustice*. While Absalom's intention was to get justice for his sister, his methods were wrong. Shortly after he usurped the throne, he died in battle. This is the path of those who follow in the spirit of Absalom. *As believers, we should pray and seek the Lord and allow Him be our vindicator when we are faced with injustice*.

# QUESTIONS

1. Recount the series of events that led to Absalom usurping the throne. Why did he usurp the throne?

2. Reflecting on question one and your own experience, share about an injustice done to you and how you dealt with it. How would you handle future situations after learning from this sermon?

3. How can we encourage those around us who may be suffering an injustice to deal with it?