

Message #27

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Life of David

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DAVID AND THE LESSON ABOUT SOWING AND REAPING

2 SAMUEL 13

I.

Rose McGowan (PROJECTOR ON--- ROSE MCGOWAN) is a Hollywood actress of considerable fame. She has an unusual background. She was born in Italy, where her father was the head of the Italian branch of the Children of God movement. Those of you in my generation will remember that it was a cult of considerable notoriety back in the 70s and 80s.

When Rose was ten, her parents moved to Oregon. They divorced. Rose became a runaway in Portland for a time. When she was fifteen, she achieved legal emancipation from her parents. She moved to Los Angeles and pursued an acting career. She got her first break when she appeared in a movie in 1992. She then had success in independent films. In 1997 Rose attended the Sundance Film Festival in Utah. There she had the opportunity to meet the famous producer Harvey Weinstein (HARVEY WEINSTEIN). She was 23. He invited her to his palatial suite and proceeded to rape her.

When Rose later visited a criminal lawyer, the woman discouraged her from pressing charges. There was an out-of-court settlement where Rose was given \$100,000. She didn't think of breaking her silence. She told an interviewer, **"I wish just one person would've stood up and said 'No more,' because so many people had so many chances to put a stop to this."** (ABC News, 1/30/2018) It would be twenty more years before *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* would do exposes that would lead to the "Me, Too" movement. Eventually over ninety women complained that Harvey Weinstein had assaulted or harassed them. (PROJECTOR OFF)

How could this situation be allowed to go on for so long? Why did women not speak up sooner? Perhaps Tamar will be able to tell us. She is a central character in the passage before us this morning.

In our study of the life of David we have seen in #11 that David messed up big time by committing adultery with Bathsheba and then trying to cover it up by having her husband Uriah killed. Last week we

saw in #12 that the prophet Nathan confronted David. The king confessed his wrongdoing and was forgiven by the Lord. But the Lord also declared that David would have negative consequences which would adversely affect his family. We saw last week that the first evidence of that was the death of his son by Bathsheba. Today we will find out what other bad things happen in David's family.

I.

We will begin with vv. 1-14 of 2 Samuel #13 (which can be found on p. 264 in the black Bibles under many of the chairs) as we consider THE RAPE. (PROJECTOR ON--- I. THE RAPE) The story begins in v. 1: **"Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her."** The same non-specific time indicator is used here which we have found at the beginning of many of the preceding chapters. It is likely that this story did follow chronologically the events described in #12.

It is important to understand how these children fit into David's family. We were given a brief description back in #3 vv. 2-3. (2 SAMUEL 3:2-3). There we were told, **"And sons were born to David at Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam of Jezreel; and his second, Chileab, of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur..."**

So Amnon is the number one son and the apparent heir to the throne. The second son in the birth order is Chileab. He is not mentioned again, and it is likely that he died before reaching adulthood. The third son is Absalom, who is born by a different mother--- Maacah, the daughter of the king of Geshur. Tamar is the sister of Absalom. (PROJECTOR OFF)

In the next chapter we are told that there was no one else as handsome as Absalom. Here we are told that Tamar is beautiful. Amnon, her half-brother, is attracted to her. We begin to see that there are significant parallels with the incident involving David and Bathsheba. Bathsheba was described as "very beautiful." David was attracted to her.

Verse 2: **"And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her."** The children of each mom in the family had separate living quarters. Perhaps they all lived in separate houses.

We might wonder what the text means when we are told that it seemed impossible for Amnon to do anything to her. Perhaps it means that because Tamar is his half sister, he realized that marriage is out. Perhaps it was because Tamar had high moral standards. Perhaps the reference is to the household arrangement by which Tamar is surrounded by adults and shielded from others. Perhaps it is a combination of these factors that produced this conclusion in Amnon's mind.

The situation made Amnon sick. Maybe he was depressed. Maybe he had stomach issues. Maybe he was having sleep problems. His feelings toward Tamar were closer to infatuation than genuine love. It was something less than genuine love which drew David to Bathsheba.

According to v. 3, **"But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother. And Jonadab was a very crafty man."** Jonadab was cousin to all of these siblings and apparently a part of the royal household. He is described as "very crafty." The Hebrew word is most often translated as "wise." Its original meaning was "skillful." It came to be used in the Old Testament most often of the skillful and moral use of knowledge. But with Jonadab there seems to be a dark side to his skillful use of knowledge. Jonadab's wisdom is not necessarily used toward godly ends.

Verses 4 & 5: **"And he said to him, 'O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?' Amnon said to him, 'I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.' Jonadab said to him, 'Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.'"** Jonadab is the consummate politician. He knows how to get things done in the royal household. He knows that the king tends to show up when one of his kids is sick.

What Jonadab's interest is in this is not clear. He may just want to be a player. He wants to ingratiate himself into the highest levels of the family, and Amnon is, after all, the crown prince. He is willing to use deceit to do it.

Jonadab understands that Amnon wants to see Tamar. So he tries to set up a situation where he can look at her. That, remember, was how David got in trouble with Bathsheba. He kept looking at her when he should have stopped.

Look at v. 6: **"So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may**

eat from her hand.” This passage is the only place in the Old Testament where this word for “cakes” appears. It is based on the Hebrew word for “love.” So perhaps the cakes themselves, or at least their name, was associated with love in that culture.

Verse 7: **“Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, ‘Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him.’”** This also has echoes of the story of Bathsheba and David. Here David sends for Tamar to have her go to Amnon.

In vv. 8-11 we read, **“So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes. And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, ‘Send out everyone from me.’ So everyone went out from him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, ‘Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand.’ And Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, ‘Come, lie with me, my sister.’”** It is a warning sign when a powerful man asks people to leave so that he can be with a beautiful woman.

Is Amnon proposing marriage? No, he just wants to have sex. Did David originally want to take Bathsheba as his wife? No, he just wanted to have sex. Where did Amnon learn this kind of behavior?

Verse 12: **“She answered him, ‘No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing.’”** Marriage in this culture usually happened to a girl when she was a young teenager. So Tamar is probably a young gal. She is beautiful and has high standards. Amnon is forceful. Tamar appeals to custom and religious tradition. She labels Amnon’s behavior as “outrageous.” The actual Hebrew word is based on the name that we saw ascribed to Nabal several weeks ago. It is “nabal,” which is fool. Amnon is acting contrary to wisdom and godliness.

Does the parallelism extend to Bathsheba? Did she react in a similar way to David’s advances? We don’t know.

Tamar continues to speak in v. 13: **“As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.”** For a chaste princess of the royal household, this would be a horrible offense. For Amnon to do this, it would make him Nabal, the fool. He is the heir to the throne. He is the

future king of Israel. Does he want to be known as a rapist, the reputation that has smudged the character of his father? David, unfortunately, has left a bad legacy for his son.

Tamar offers the possibility of marriage. I doubt that this is her desire. But she is desperate to stop the behavior of her half-brother. In Leviticus #18 v. 9 (PROJECTOR ON--- LEVITICUS 18:9) God's law declared, **"You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home."** This prohibition would seem to rule out marriage to a half-brother, but David has not followed other laws pertaining to marriage. He has engaged in polygamy. Their ancestor Abraham married his half-sister Sarah. Perhaps the king would allow such an arrangement. (PROJECTOR OFF)

Verse 14 says, **"But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her."** The model of bad behavior has been passed down to the next generation. David is seeing the negative consequences of his sin in what is happening here. Amnon is going to see the negative consequences of his sin. Tamar is the unfortunate victim.

II.

We come then in vv. 15-20 to THE REJECTION. (PROJECTOR ON--- II. THE REJECTION) Verse 15 tells us, **"Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, 'Get up! Go!'"** In Hebrew it is just two words: Get up! Go! *Qumi! Leki!*

Amnon had anticipated this act. He thought about it and dreamed about it and fantasized about it. In the end it could not deliver. There was no real fulfillment. Certainly this was not love. The lust could not really satisfy. There was no return of affection. So for Amnon there was guilt and self-hatred. To see Tamar anymore was only to be reminded of his own failing, his own selfishness.

Verse 16: **"But she said to him, 'No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me.' But he would not listen to her."** Tamar is left an emotional wreck. She has been violated and then rejected. There is no hint even of compassion from this one who is her half-brother. This young man is also the crown prince. He has a powerful position. He is scheduled to be king some day. How is Tamar to process this?

In vv. 17-19 we are told, **“He called the young man who served him and said, ‘Put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her.’ Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves, for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed. So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.”** This garment signified Tamar’s status as an unmarried princess. Torn, it symbolized the ruin of her self-image.

Putting her hands on her head signified grief. This was the sign of grief displayed by captives of war in this time and in this part of the world. (MEDINET HABU) On a tomb in Egypt during the rule of Ramses III captives of his army are shown putting their hands on their heads as a sign of grief and defeat.

Rose McGowan (PROJECTOR OFF) later described how she felt in her memoir entitled *Brave*: **“I felt so dirty. I had been so violated, and I was sad to the core of my being. I kept thinking about how he’d been sitting behind me at the theater the night before it happened. Which made it--- not my responsibility exactly, but--- like I had had a hand in tempting him, which made it even sicker and made me feel dirtier.”**

Verse 20: **“And her brother Absalom said to her, ‘Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. (PROJECTOR OFF) He is your brother; do not take this to heart.’ So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house.”** Absalom may be trying to be helpful. But there is not much comfort to be found in his words. “Don’t worry about it. Just forget about it. It will be OK.”

I have talked to a number of women over the years who have been victims of sexual abuse. The experience has marked them. Many years later it still haunts them. Too often the experience has led to self-defeating behaviors--- drugs, alcohol, cutting, overeating, self-blame. It becomes challenging for these creatures created in the image of God to appreciate their infinite value and worth.

Our male Absalom minds may think that these women should be able to get over it. But it is not easy. It requires time and the grace of God to overcome. It requires work and lots of support.

III.

In v. 21 we encounter THE ROYAL SILENCE. (PROJECTOR ON--- III. THE ROYAL SILENCE) The narrator tells us, **“When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry.”** David had the same emotional

reaction when Nathan the prophet told him the parable in which David was the real subject. That reaction and that story prompted David to confess his sin.

Here David does--- nothing. He is the father of the family and the king of the country, the top justice official in the land. He learns about what happened, and he does--- nothing. Harvey Weinstein carried on his evil behavior for over twenty years, and nobody did much of anything during that time. Eventually over ninety women came forward to tell similar tales. Other women and a few men knew at least part of the story, but no one did much of anything. Similar stories were told about Bill Cosby and Matt Lauer and Bill O'Reilly. All of this led to the "Me, Too" movement.

Why did David do nothing? He was guilty of a similar sin. He did something even worse. He killed a woman's husband. It is hard to discipline someone who is guilty of the same offense. David also realized that he had a part in what happened to his daughter. He sent her to Amnon. Then also David was seemingly an absent father. He had so many wives and so many kids. How could he keep up with them all?

The early Greek translation of the Old Testament and one of the Dead Sea Scrolls adds this line to v. 21: **"But he would not hurt Amnon because he was his eldest son, and he loved him."** Still, it was his job. Did he not have love for his daughter Tamar? Where was his love for her? It is likewise our responsibility as men and fathers and church leaders and bosses to intervene for abused women. It is likewise the responsibility of mothers and sisters and women and even criminal defense lawyers to seek justice. It is very difficult for the victims of abuse to defend themselves.

It was very difficult for Tamar. Where was the concern for her? Where could she find justice? Amnon was seemingly left unpunished. Absalom is left seething. The other children and grandchildren are left with a poor example of fathering. There is a quotation popularly attributed to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Christian martyr of WW II fame, but probably wrongly so. It does express a powerful truth: **"Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."**

IV.

The remainder of the chapter describes THE REVENGE. (IV. THE REVENGE) According to v. 22, **"But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had violated**

his sister Tamar." Absalom saw that his father was not going to do anything. He saw that there was no justice for his sister. He seemingly provides little comfort to his sister, but he does begin to plot.

Verse 23: **"After two full years Absalom had sheepshearers at Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons."** The shearing of sheep was normally a festive occasion. Absalom's flock was going to be shorn at Baal-hazor. (BAAL-HAZOR) This was a place about fifteen miles north northeast of Jerusalem.

According to vv. 24 & 25, **"And Absalom came to the king and said, 'Behold, your servant has sheepshearers. Please let the king and his servants go with your servant.' But the king said to Absalom, 'No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you.' He pressed him, but he would not go but gave him his blessing."** (PROJECTOR OFF) Absalom anticipated this response from his father. It was part of his plan.

Verses 26 & 27: **"Then Absalom said, 'If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us.' And the king said to him, 'Why should he go with you?' But Absalom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him."** Amnon was the crown prince. He was the natural one to stand in for his father at a family celebration.

Verse 28: **"Then Absalom commanded his servants, 'Mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Do not fear; have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant.'" This has echoes of David's treatment of Uriah. Get the guy drunk, and we will have him where we want him. In this case, we can kill Amnon.**

Verse 29: **"So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each mounted his mule and fled."** Mules were the BMWs of choice for the royal family back in that day.

Verses 30-33: **"While they were on the way, news came to David, 'Absalom has struck down all the king's sons, and not one of them is left.' Then the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the earth. And all his servants who were standing by tore their garments. But Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, 'Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from**

the day he violated his sister Tamar. Now therefore let not my lord the king so take it to heart as to suppose that all the king's sons are dead, for Amnon alone is dead.”

Jonadab gave advice at the beginning to Amnon. Now he appears to be aware of Absalom's plot. Did he even give advice to him? At the very least Jonadab is an opportunist. He said nothing to stop the murder of his earlier friend Amnon.

David is watching all of this unfold. In a sense, he is watching the same kind of evil deed which he had committed. He is now watching it through the perspective of others. He is feeling some of the pain which he has caused others. For now his family is being directly affected.

According to vv. 34-36, **“But Absalom fled. And the young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, many people were coming from the road behind him by the side of the mountain. And Jonadab said to the king, ‘Behold, the king's sons have come; as your servant said, so it has come about.’ And as soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came and lifted up their voice and wept. And the king also and all his servants wept very bitterly.”**

There is grief over the loss of a brother. There is grief over the loss of Absalom, who has fled. There is grief at the realization that there is a killer in the family. There is grief over division in the family. There is grief over the realization of the consequences of David's inaction.

The story concludes in vv. 37-39: **“But Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son day after day. So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. And the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom, because he was comforted about Amnon, since he was dead.”** Absalom obviously fears David's reaction to his killing of Amnon. He has killed the crown prince, and now he is next in line to the throne. Yet he has left the country. He has fled to Geshur (PROJECTOR ON--- GESHUR), which was a kingdom to the east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. King Talmai was his grandfather through his mother. He would be safe there.

The original text of v. 39 is uncertain, and the meaning of the text is unclear. Probably it is saying that David chose not to go after Absalom, and over time he lost some of his anger. (PROJECTOR OFF) From what happens in the next chapter, it is not necessarily the case that David is longing to get close to Absalom.

So it is that Absalom gets his revenge. But he has to flee, and the family becomes further divided. David has to deal with a dysfunctional family, and he has to face the fact that he is dealing with the consequences of his own sins. Such is the result of serious sin.

V.

(PROJECTOR ON--- THE REFLECTION) Consider finally THE REFLECTION. What are we to make of all of this? The primary lesson that I find here for us comes from Galatians #6 v. 7. (GALATIANS 6:7) There the Apostle Paul writes, **“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.”**

David messed up his romantic life when he caved to the pressure of culture and began to acquire multiple wives. Then he committed adultery with Bathsheba and tried to cover that up by killing her husband. While God forgave him for that, he suffered consequences by helping to create a dysfunctional family. There is disruption and death because of his bad example and because of his refusal to take constructive action.

Amnon follows in the footsteps of his father. He gives in to lust and hurts his sister Tamar. No one spoke up for her. Amnon ended up dead. Absalom sought justice and revenge. But he went about it in the wrong way. He did not seek guidance from God. He apparently did not approach his father. He shows little evidence of trust in God.

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.” Harvey Weinstein messed up at least ninety women. In the end he lost his business. His wife left him and divorced him. He left a negative legacy for his five children, four of whom are girls. He lost friends. Earlier this year a New York jury found him guilty, and a judge sentenced him to 23 years in prison. Criminal charges are still pending in Los Angeles.

The simple lesson to us is: Follow God. Resist temptation. Be quick to confess sin. Stand up for women who are victims of abuse.