

The Bitter, the Bold, the Beautiful **2 Samuel 16:5-14, 19:15-23**

Introduction:

1. Here in our text, David is at one of the lowest points of his life. His son has rebelled against him and stolen his throne, and David has been forced to flee with some of his loyal men from Jerusalem. Imagine how difficult this was. Talk about gut-wrenching!
2. As David was fleeing, he came through the city of Bahurim. There, a man by the name of Shimei met him. Have you ever heard of kicking a man while he is down? This is what happens. vs. 5-8, 13
3. Shimei was of the house of Saul, and had obviously nursed a deep grudge against David for years.
4. Abishai, one of David's generals, wanted to decapitate Shimei for David (vs. 9). David was amazingly merciful, and allowed Shimei to embarrass and disgrace him. vs. 10-12
5. Later on in chapter 19, these same three men meet again when David is restored back to his throne. What would happen? How would David respond to this man who offended him? Would he take revenge, or execute judgment? Would Abishai get his desired revenge?
6. Offences in life are bound to come. People will hurt you, do you wrong, or treat you unfairly. The question is, "How will you respond?"
7. We see three possible responses represented by these three men – Shimei, Abishai, and David. You decide which response you think is most like Christ.

First, you can become bitter and critical.

1. Shimei was of the house of Saul, the former king that God rejected. David had replaced Saul as king. Shimei had obviously been holding on to bitterness for years.
2. Now that David's throne had been usurped, and David was down for the count, Shimei decided to allow his internal bitterness to flow out in a stream of poison directed at David. He cursed him, disgraced him, threw rocks at him, and accused him.
3. Having a bitter spirit and a critical tongue is such an ugly thing. It's like drinking poison and hoping your enemy will die from it. All it does is kill you.
4. Shimei was full of bitterness at David, and David had no clue. This is common. The person with a critical spirit usually gets bitter at people who never even intended them any harm. The people they are bitter at may not even know they are bitter.
5. Are you a critical person? Do you hang on to offenses and allow the cancer of bitterness to eat you up? Is this the kind of person you want to be – a Shimei? Is this the kind of person you want to be known as – given over to a bitter and critical spirit?

6. Later on, Shimei came to David, humbled himself before him, and begged for mercy (19:18-20). He confessed his sin to the king, was willing to be a servant, and desired a change of identity. He no longer referred to himself as being from the house of Saul, but from the house of Joseph.
 - Did Shimei really have a change of heart, or was he doing what was expedient for him at the time?
7. I don't know for sure, but there is one thing I do know. If **you** really desire to change, Christ can help you to change. You can rid yourself of that bitter and critical spirit through Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 4:13

Second, you can become full of bold revenge.

1. The second man I want to look at is David's general, Abishai. When Shimei was disgracing David and his men, Abishai's first response was, "Kill him. Take his head off. Let's get revenge and do it now!" 16:9
2. Later on, in chapter 19, when Shimei bows before David and pleads for mercy, Abishai steps forward and gives some more advice (19:21). Abishai's solution to every problem is, "Kill him!"
3. If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to approach every problem as if it were a nail. Abishai is thinking the way most people think. "He kicked you when you were down, so kick him back, and kick him hard. Finish him off."
4. When other people offend you and do you wrong, the human, fleshly response is to retaliate in some way, or get revenge if you have opportunity. Cut them off as friends, avoid them, give them the silent treatment, talk behind their backs... really make them pay!
5. I think we all have some Abishai in us, don't we? But what does God's Word teach us? Romans 12:17-19, 21
6. Have you ever heard, "I don't get mad, I just get even"? This may sound tough and cool, but it is no way to live life. The thirst for revenge will drown you. Don't be an Abishai. Allow Christ to fill your heart with love for others, even if they have done you dirty.

Third, you can allow the beauty of mercy and forgiveness to fill you.

1. If anybody could have easily gotten full of bitterness and revenge, it was David. David has been tossed from his home, his kingdom was stolen by his son, he was forced to flee like a wild animal, and now this mean-spirited man threw rocks at him and cursed him.
2. Would you have been tempted to take the guy's head off? David could have unleashed his anger and frustration on this man, but he didn't. Notice how he responded. 16:10-12
3. Why would David think that God had sent this guy to rebuke him? Because David was acutely aware of his **own** sins. He thought that this may simply be a part of God's judgment, and a consequence of his own sin. Wow! Now that is humility!!

4. When other people offend us, what do we tend to do? We immediately justify ourselves and think things like, “I don’t deserve this. They are wrong. They need to get right. They need to pay for this.”
5. In chapter 19, David is restored as king and Shimei is the first one to meet David as David returned to Jerusalem. But, what a change (19:18-20)! He was either a very changed man, or a very good actor.
6. But I love David’s response after Abishai wants to kill Shimei (19:21-23). David took this man’s apology at face value, forgave him, and said, “*Thou shalt not die.*” What welcome words to the ears of a sinner! Remember when God said those words to you?
7. When Shimei said, “*I have sinned,*” don’t you think David’s mind went back to a few months prior to this when Nathan confronted him with his sin and David uttered the exact same words, “*I have sinned*”? Nathan said, “*Thou shalt not die.*” 12:13
8. This is the key to being filled with the beauty of mercy and forgiveness towards others who may have done you wrong. We must remember our own sin against God, and His forgiveness of our sins. Ephesians 4:32

In Conclusion:

1. We saw three men, today. All three men were offended by the actions of another.
 - Shimei was full of a bitter and critical spirit.
 - Abishai was full of a revengeful spirit.
 - David was full of a merciful and forgiving spirit.
2. David is such a picture of Christ. When the crowd cursed Christ, mocked and reviled Him, He said, “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*”
3. How beautiful is a person full of Christ-like mercy and forgiveness. It is such a beautiful thing to behold.