

2 Samuel 15:13–37 — David’s Friend

Hushai the Archite: Friendship, a Career, and a Hope in the Day When the King Is Away

Scripture Reading: 2 Samuel 15:13–37

“And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

So Hushai David’s friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.”

David as a Type of Christ

David is in many ways a type of Christ — the one who slew Goliath the giant of the Philistines, the man after God’s own heart, chosen and anointed while another sat on the throne. In David’s kingdom there were those who were faithful to him, and their faithfulness to David corresponds to the faithfulness that should mark those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. As David’s servants did what David said, so we should do what the Lord says.

Absalom was David’s son, and he rebelled against his father. The period of Absalom’s rebellion was a bad time to be connected with David. It was a serious

time, a difficult time. The city was filled with vile and filthy things under Absalom's occupation; everything was in disorder; David was gone. We are in an analogous moment. The Lord Jesus has gone up into heaven, received in the cloud from the sight of his disciples; and the world is in disorder first and foremost because he is not given the first place in it. This world, like Jerusalem under Absalom, is a world from which the true king is absent.

David's flight is marked by one remarkable feature: his concern was not primarily for his own life but that the city should not be smitten with the edge of the sword. Most kings who flee are fleeing for their lives. David fled so that the city might be spared. There is in David something of the character of the Lord Jesus himself — a most unusual king whose heart is marked by the kindness of God.

The Ark Sent Back: What David Left, and What Went with Him

When David left Jerusalem, he left the ark of God behind. He did not take it with him. He sent Zadok and Abiathar back with it: "Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again." David knew that the ark belonged in Jerusalem, and he would not take it on the basis of personal sentiment. But David's servants went with David — most of them. Those who went with him were not wrong to go. Those who stayed with the ark were not wrong to stay. Each had his place, and David assigned it.

The Lord Jesus has ascended to heaven, and all of those who believed on him — every one of them, so far — have gone up to heaven with him. Every disciple, every apostle. There are a few left, that is all. Left here in a world that is full of darkness and wickedness. Left here for a purpose.

Hushai: David's Friend Left in Jerusalem

Of all the people in this chapter, one figure stands out for meditation: Hushai the Archite. He is introduced simply as David's friend — and as far as can be traced, there are only two men in all the Bible who are called by that title. Hushai came to David as he fled, ready to go with him. And David told him: if you come with me, you will be a burden to me. That is a striking thing to say to a friend. Go back into the city. Go back to Absalom. Pretend to serve him. And defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

It is a little like the Apostle Paul, who had a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. The Lord, in effect, said to Paul: it is better for everyone if you remain a little longer. There were more epistles to write, more things to suffer for Jesus' sake. So it was with Hushai: he had something to do for David that required him to stay behind while David was away.

Three Gifts of Friendship: Career, Hope, and the King's Return

Hushai's story holds three things that are given to those who are David's friends, and that are given to us as those who belong to the Lord Jesus.

The first is friendship itself. This is not salvation, though it begins there. It is something more: the walk of communion with the Lord in this world. The Lord Jesus desires that those who belong to him would be his friends in the fullest sense — those whose hearts are attached to his heart, who know his heart. Hushai knew David's heart. That is what it means to be someone's friend — not a fair-weather acquaintance, but one whose heart is joined to the heart of the other. Hushai was David's friend when the chips were down, when the situation was bad, when being associated with David was a costly thing.

The second is a career — something to do. David left Hushai in Jerusalem with a specific commission: defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. The devil has his counsels, his principles and ideas that he nurtures and spreads in the world. Those who are David's friends are left here with the purpose of defeating those

counsels. They did not choose this assignment when they were boys; it found them because they were David's friends. As a man's heart becomes attached to the Lord Jesus, a purpose opens up before him that is suited to the time and the need. In chapter 17, Hushai did exactly that: he defeated the counsel of Ahithophel, not by brilliance or physical strength, but because the hand of God was with him. The Lord took the credit. Hushai was the instrument.

The third gift is hope. David said, in verse 25: "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again." David is coming back. And the Lord Jesus has said something very like it: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." Hushai waited for David's return during Absalom's occupation of Jerusalem. If you had asked him, how long will you have to wait? he would have said: I do not know. It might be today. All I know is that David said he will bring me again — and I know that David finds favour in the eyes of the Lord. He was certain of that not from calculation but from friendship. He knew David's heart. And because he knew David's heart, he knew his coming back was certain.

Those who know the Lord Jesus — not merely know about him but know him, whose hearts are joined to his heart — know with the same certainty that he is coming again. Not because they have worked it out from prophetic calculation, but because they know him. That hope is the possession of his friends.

Friendship. A career. A hope that he will bring me again. Those are the three things left with David's friends in the day of the king's absence.