

Pastor Jim Lloyd

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Title: "A Portrait of a Forgiving Heart"

Text: 2 Samuel 19:16-23

(Read the text.) This is the second time that Shimei's life has been spared at the hands of King David. Our journey through David's life has shown us his grand mountain peaks of success and his horrible valleys of failure. We have seen David when he was WALKING in the POWER OF GOD and when he was WALLOWING in the DEPTHS OF SIN. We have celebrated his VICTORIES and wept with him in his DEFEATS. But, through all the times of David's life, one thing has remained constant: David has proven time and time again why God called him "*a man after Mine Own heart.*" How can we say that David was a man after God's Own heart when he was guilty of DECEIT, ADULTERY and MURDER? What we fail to remember is that David was a good man and he was a godly man, but he was STILL HUMAN. When he excelled, he rose to the top. When he failed, he plummeted to the very bottom. BUT through it all, David was quick to get things straightened out with God. Yes, he failed and he failed BIG. But, when he was confronted with His sin, confession was quickly offered and repentance was swift. David was a man after God's Own heart because he was a man who kept SHORT ACCOUNTS with GOD.

The passage we are considering today is one that gives us a picture of David's heart. He is returning to Jerusalem after the rebellion and death of his son Absalom. As David nears the city, he is met by a man named Shimei. Shimei had wronged David and if anybody deserved David's hatred and wrath, it was Shimei. But, when David came face to face with Shimei, David did not react in anger or malice. Rather we see a picture of compassion and forgiveness.

Today, I would like for us to examine this meeting between David and Shimei. I want you to see David's heart on this occasion. David's reaction in these verses gives us *A Portrait of a Forgiving Heart*. He teaches us a lesson that we ALL desperately need to learn. Here we see some of the elements of David's relationship with Shimei. These elements teach us how to respond when we are injured by others AND they teach us how to develop a forgiving heart.

- 1. The Attack David Suffered (2 Samuel 16:5-23).** To understand what is happening in 2 Samuel 19, we must first look at an event that occurred several months earlier. (Read 2 Samuel 16:5-8.) Here we see David attacked by this man named Shimei. Shimei had some harsh words for the broken king as he fled the city of Jerusalem during the rebellion of Absalom. Let's examine Shimei's attack: **A. It involved Caustic Words.** As David is leaving the city of Jerusalem and his home, Shimei comes toward David and his men. As he approaches, Shimei is said to be "*cursing*" (vs. 5). This word was used to refer to things that were "worthless and vile; or disgraced." Shimei is reveling in the fact that David has been disgraced. But, that's not all Shimei had to say to David that day. He calls him a "*bloodthirsty man*" and a "*son of Belial.*" The phrase "*son of Belial*" means "a vain, worthless man." So as King David approaches, Shimei keeps on saying, "Get out of here you murderer. Get out of here you fool, you nobody!" So at what might have been David's LOWEST point, Shimei's words adds insult to injury. Anyone ever have someone say hurtful things to you or about you? Probably all of us! True or False – When it happens, it hurts and often it brings anger with it. "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." We all know that's not true! Words do hurt! **B. It involved Cruel Works.** Not only did Shimei use words to attack David, but he also used STONES (vs. 6). There's one thing worse than being hurt emotionally, and that's being hurt emotionally AND physically. Shimei wanted to hurt David's HEART with his WORDS and his FLESH with his STONES. Another thing to consider is the fact that Shimei is trying his best to publicly humiliate David. It hurts when we are attacked by others – to our face or behind our back. It's even more painful when we are humiliated PUBLICLY by the words and deeds of others. Ever been there? **C. It involved Callous Ways.** Some of what Shimei said was true. David WAS guilty of murder, though I am not certain how many people knew about it. Regardless, David surely did! While the "bloodthirsty man" part was TRUE, the rest of Shimei's words were LIES. David was NOT a "vain, worthless man." He WAS God's chosen King of Israel. In spite of his failures and his foolishness, he was God's anointed and was to be respected for that fact alone. 1 Chronicles 16:22 says "*Touch not mine anointed...*" If you remember – when David was given the opportunity to kill Saul, David refused to lay His hand on God's man (1 Samuel 24:6; 26:11). The words of Shimei in verse 8 are nothing but blatant lies. In fact, there are three lies in this verse. God is getting revenge against David for murdering Saul and his family. That is a lie! Saul committed suicide and his sons were killed in battle. David, you stole the throne. That is a lie! The throne was given to David by a sovereign act of God. God has given your throne to Absalom. That is a lie! Absalom took the throne of his father by rebellion. Here is the bottom line. Shimei was

the "son of Belial". He was the kind of person who would kick another man when he was down. At this moment in time David is at the lowest point of his life. His kingdom and his family are in shambles. He is an outcast and is on the run from HIS OWN SON. In the midst of all that, here comes Shimei. He finds David at a vulnerable moment and he attacks him. It doesn't get any lower than that! You ever been there? Have you ever been kicked when you were down? It hurts, doesn't it? David's reaction to Shimei and his attack is worthy of notice. David's nephew Abishai offers to kill Shimei (2 Samuel 16:9). By the way, he deserved to die! But, instead of allowing Shimei to be put to death, David responds in an amazing fashion. He just says, "Let him alone. Maybe the Lord has told him to do this. Maybe he is right! If he is, so be it. But, if he is wrong, the Lord will work it out in His time and in His way." That takes grace and mercy. David may have been at one of the lowest points in his life, but this is the high water mark of self-control. It teaches us a few lessons as well. What are we supposed to do when we are attacked? Are we supposed to get even? Are we supposed to go after our "pound of flesh?" When someone hurts us, we want to hurt them back twice as bad. Isn't that what we are supposed to do? NO! We are supposed to do just what David did. We are supposed to place the matter in the hands of the Lord and leave it with Him. He knows what was said and what was done. He knows the motive behind the attack. He knows how to settle the score if it needs to be settled. He knows how to give you grace to get past the hurt. God's design for His children is that we become like Jesus. 1 Peter 2:23 - "...who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously." Isaiah 53:7 - "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth." So, the next time you are cursed, attacked, threatened, lied about, etc., what are you going to do? Well, you can step outside of God's will and handle it yourself OR you can take the high road and leave it in the hands of God. Ask yourself: WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? By the way, if you determine that you are going to be like Jesus, you had better keep a tender heart ready to forgive, and you had better have "thick skin" because attacks will follow. Learn like David did to deal with these kinds of matters at the very moment of offense. If you don't, that hurt will fester into something far worse and far more dangerous. If we are not diligent in handling these matters the right way, that offense will grow into resentment. From there, it is just a short step into hatred. That hatred will produce bitterness, and bitterness will turn to revenge. It's a wise thing when we place our hurts in the hands of the Lord and walk away from them. He can handle the matter far better than we can!

2. **The Admission David Secured (2 Samuel 19:16-20).** Well, months have passed. The rebellion of Absalom has been quashed. David is returning home. As he and his men cross the Jordan, several people are gathering to meet the returning king. Among them are old Shimei and one thousand of his men. Let's examine what happened the SECOND time these men met. **A. There was a Humble Confession (vs. 18).** When Shimei comes before David, he falls at his feet in humility. This is a far different attitude than he displayed the last time his path crossed that of David. Perhaps Shimei has had time to contemplate his mistakes. **B. There was an Honest Confession (vs. 19-20).** Shimei said the three hardest words known to man: "I HAVE SINNED." He made a full confession of his wrong in his attack on David. **C. There was a Hopeful Confession (vs. 19-20).** Shimei hopes that David won't hold the past against him. He seems genuinely sorry for what he has done and is hopeful that David will offer him forgiveness. In my opinion, Shimei did a very brave thing! There is some debate among scholars as to whether his confession was sincere, or whether it was just an attempt to save his hide. Sometimes a person is sorry. Sometimes a person is just sorry he got caught! We cannot know his heart or his motives, but it seems to me that we should just take the account at face value. I don't see any scriptural indication that the Holy Spirit called his confession into question. Now, before we look at David's response to Shimei, I think we should take a moment to find something that speaks to our own hearts. Let's get practical. The truth is, we have ALL been hurt. But, the sadder truth is that we have all BEEN ON THE OTHER SIDE too! We are all guilty of saying things out of turn, talking about someone else, doing hurtful things, and even of telling lies about another person. When life finds us in this position, what are we supposed to do? We are to do exactly what Shimei did. We are to go to the person we have offended and we are to confess to them what we have done and we are to seek their forgiveness. That is the clear teaching of the Bible (Matthew 5:23-24; James 5:16).
3. **The Amnesty David Supplied (2 Samuel 19:21-23).** David responds to Shimei in grace and not in retaliation. Notice what David Did. (What he did is a lesson to those of us who get hurt.) **A. What David Prevented.** Again, Abishai want to kill Shimei, but David PREVENTS his violent nephew from killing the humbled man. In other words, David stood as a protector of the very person who had wronged him. That is grace! **B. What David**

Perceived. David knew that it was a day of rejoicing and a day of forgiveness. He also perceived that it was a day of grace in his own life. He was returning to reclaim his throne AND it was only so because God had forgiven him and had given him grace and NOT what he deserved. **C. What David Promised.** David promised forgiveness and amnesty to Shimei. Why? It had not been very long since David himself had sinned against Uriah, Bathsheba, the nation of Israel and the GOD of Heaven and earth. When David had bowed before the Lord and confessed his sins, God had FREELY forgiven him. Now, David extends grace to one who had wronged him greatly. David's response to Shimei demonstrates what our own response should be when we are faced with an opportunity to forgive. First, we need to remember that even at our very best NONE of us are perfect. We have ALL sinned against God and we have ALL sinned against others. We have been forgiven many times. We have a responsibility to forgive others when they sin against us. Get the picture? Second, just as we should be quick to forgive, we should learn to EXPRESS that forgiveness. In other words, don't just think it, SAY IT! When something happens, we may pray about the matter and leave it with the Lord, but the offending party needs to know that they have been forgiven. We need to reach out to those who reach out to us! What if someone hurts us and they don't deal with it? Can we hold a grudge then? Is it all right to be angry with them until they come around begging our forgiveness? The simple answer is NO! Not and be like Christ. Regardless of what they do to us or say about us we should have the same spirit Jesus displayed when He was on the cross and he said, *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34). A good example of this kind of forgiveness is demonstrated in a story told by Stuart Briscoe. He says, "Some years ago a fashionably dressed woman came to my study, very distressed." She had made a commitment to the Lord a few days earlier but had asked to see the pastor because something was troubling her. She poured out an unpleasant story concerning an affair she had been having with one of her husband's friends. Then she insisted that her husband should know, and that the pastor should tell him! That was a new experience for the pastor. After some discussion with the woman, the pastor called her husband. When her husband arrived at his study, the pastor told him what had happened. Turning to his tearful and fearful wife, he said, "I love you. I forgive you. Let's make a new start." Many things had to be straightened out and much hurt had to be healed, but his response of forgiveness, made possible by his own understanding of the forgiveness of God, became the basis of a new joy and a new life. One more illustration - Bryan Koch, pastor of the AG Church Glad Tidings in Reading, PA. (We have been praying for this pastor and his church.) One of the first sermons I ever preached was to the youth group at Glad Tidings when Bryan's predecessor was pastoring. Three of my college friends, Tom, Greg and Jimmy serve on the board at Glad Tidings. Bryan also serves as the assistant district superintendent for the Penn-Del Ministry Network. On June 7th, a beautiful Sunday afternoon, Pastor Bryan and his wife Lynn were returning home after taking a relaxing ride on their Harley Davidson motorcycle to get some ice cream. A mile from their home, they came to a small turn in the road - a turn Pastor Bryan says they have taken a thousand times - and time stopped. Life forever changed. Three-and-a-half weeks later, after being in a medically-induced coma for most of that time and on a heavy regimen of pain killers, Bryan Koch was finally alert enough to begin to learn what had happened. They were hit head-on by a drunk driver, who reportedly was FOUR TIMES over the legal blood alcohol limit. He said, "I don't remember any of it, but they say I was pinned between the SUV and my 900-pound motorcycle. The first person on the scene saw me, saw all the blood, and thought I was dead." Paramedics pumped Koch's chest and breathed into him to keep him alive on the way to the hospital. There, doctors pumped 36 units of blood into him as blood poured from his wounds, external and internal. His injuries were extensive. His hips were fractured, his pelvis crushed, his liver was lacerated, and he had a punctured kidney. The first four or five days, doctors didn't expect him to survive as the massive injuries, infection, and fluid in his lungs were all working against his chances of life. Yet Koch says now he believes the thousands of people praying in his church, community, and literally around the world on his behalf not only made a difference then, but continue to make a difference now. After making it through those first few days, the doctors suspected that there was a good possibility that Pastor Bryan would lose his voice due to the trauma his vocal chords sustained through the tubes running down his throat. For Bryan, a former professional baseball player before being called to the ministry, the news would go from bad, to worse, to mind-numbing. I quote, "Just moments after I realized that my left leg had been amputated - which was basically removed with scissors as it was attached by so little - my wife's sisters and son walked into the room. That's when I learned Lynn had been killed instantly in the accident. I had missed her funeral, as I was still in the coma," Koch says with pain still evident in his voice. "She was a wonderful woman and a great mother to our three sons. She was just ordained in May. It was such a joy to see her do that..., she really loved God." One moment Pastor Bryan Koch seemed to

have the blessings of God overflowing in his life and the very next, nearly everything one would see as "near and dear" to his heart - his ministry/vocation, his health, his mobility AND his wife - all seemed lost forever because of ONE PERSON'S IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIONS. How could any person forgive such needless pain? Where was God in all of this? Pastor Bryan doesn't sugar coat it. "It's been a journey," he says. "Every time I look at a picture of my wife, I remember what happened to her or when I go to take my sock off my left foot, and it's not there...I became a grandpa two weeks ago - Lynn was so looking forward to being a grandma..." "But the young man who hit us, my Bible says I NEED TO FORGIVE HIM," Koch states calmly. "The young man who did this to us, driving drunk, killing my wife and doing what he did to me, he needed what Bryan Koch needed - forgiveness and saving grace. I FORGAVE HIM BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT JESUS DID FOR ME. I pray for him [the young man] and whether he gets eight days or eight years or anytime in prison, it's not going to bring Lynn back or my leg. I'm not bitter; I'm choosing to be better, because as a young man, I needed Christ in my life too." But Bryan makes the difference between divinity and humanity clear. "We HAVE to FORGIVE, but we're never going to forget; ONLY GOD CAN FORGET," he says. "We're NOT called by God to FORGET, it's not in Scripture, but we certainly need to forgive through the power of the Holy Spirit." He says God has helped comfort him through the loss of Lynn. "The day I came home from the hospital was August 8 - our 28th wedding anniversary. That was a tough day," Bryan admits. "But God gave me a Scripture, Philippians 1:21, where Paul says for me to live is Christ, to die is gain. The Holy Spirit spoke to me, 'Bryan, your wife has gone on to her gain; you are here to live for me.'" He spent 51 days in the hospital and 9 more in rehab. His doctor told him the healing process in his body wasn't just amazing, it was miraculous! Koch's voice has been restored and a prosthesis, which due to the injuries suffered to his hips and pelvis, wasn't expected to be a consideration for at least 18 months, will arrive before Christmas! A credit to Koch's leadership skills, the church family rallied together as they supported each other through Lynn's passing and continued to move forward during his recovery. When the accident occurred, the church was averaging about 2,700 a week. Now they're averaging well over 3,500 a week. On Sunday, October 18, Bryan preached from a walker and a wheelchair. They had nearly 8,000 in attendance AND 100 people made decisions for Christ! "God has taken what was meant for evil and has used it for good!" Bryan and his three boys have forgiven, BUT they haven't - nor can they - forget. Let me share this before I close. David may have forgiven Shimei, but David NEVER FORGOT what Shimei did. We read the details in 1 Kings 2:8-9. On his death bed, David tells Solomon to be sure that Shimei pays for the evil he had done. Solomon eventually carries out this command and Shimei is executed (1 Kings 1:36-46). David's forgiveness was not perfect, was it? So the perfect portrait of forgiveness is not seen in David. Some people forgive like the man in this tale: A man lay dying in a hospital bed. As he lay there, he suddenly remembered an old enemy he once held a grudge against. Calling a nurse to his bedside, he whispered, "Nurse, please summon my old enemy." The enemy arrived, and the man opened one eye, and said to him, "My enemy, I have called you here today to say I'm sorry for all the wrong I've done to you." Then he paused, and added, "But mind you, if I ever get BETTER, you be sure that the old grudge still holds good!" I sure am glad that God does not forgive like that man does! When God forgives, He also forgets. **The perfect portrait of forgiveness is seen in our loving, merciful, kind, forgiving God. He's a good, good Father!** Thank God, the truth that God forgives AND forgets is sounded forth again and again in the Bible - Jeremiah 31:34; Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 43:25. It takes effort, it takes grace and it may take all that we have, but we should strive to give forgiveness to the same level that we have received forgiveness.

- 4. Conclusion.** How are you doing in the area of forgiveness? Are you practicing the kind of forgiveness that pleases the Lord? Or, are you given to holding grudges and getting even? If there is a hurt that needs to be forgiven, there is no better time to deal with it than now. If you are the offending party it would please God for you to be expeditious in going to that other person and say, "I am sorry!" We should seek to forgive to the same level that we have been forgiven AND we should strive to keep short accounts with our fellow man AND with God. I can condense this message down into two statements: When we are wrong, we need to ADMIT IT. When we have been wronged, we need to FORGIVE.