



Series: 2 Samuel

Date: July 2, 2023

Speaker: Pastor Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

Text: 2 Samuel 16.15-19.6

MOVE FOR THE MISSION

Good Morning Mercy Church! Hey, real quick I want to set the stage for something that is coming in just a couple of months that will affect every single one of us. We shared with our members the other night that Mercy has reached an age and stage where it is critical that we focus on the mission God has called us to. “Critical age” meaning we are just old enough as a church, 7 years old, where we could get comfortable going through the motions of church week in and week out, and we lose the urgency of reaching the lost with the gospel that we had year 1 & 2. For OUR sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, we need to focus on the mission God gives the church to make disciples of Jesus who love God, love each other, and love our

world. So we are going to call everyone who calls Mercy Church home to make a move for the mission this fall.

And I don't know how else to say this other than to say if you've been on the sideline this is the time for you to get in the game. Period full send. We are starting a campus in Union County, some of you need to move for the mission and join the launch team. We are adding a service at Mercy Northeast, and some of you need to move for the mission and join a serve team there at Northeast. We are temporarily adding a 3rd service here at Providence Road this fall, and many of you need to step off the sideline and into ministry here. [Here are our new service times starting September 10th.](#)

Listen, I don't talk numbers much because the number God majors on is the one. The one lost sheep. The one far from God but close to you. He sees people so we try to make our ministry about the one as well. BUT, God does take time to organize His people and expand His people when they were growing. Read Exodus 18 where He calls people into leadership at every level. I know He cares about numbers of people because He gave us a book called...Numbers. **Listen, Mercy is about twice the size it was before the pandemic. But our ministry teams and our facility capacity and our community groups are NOT twice the size.** So, we are moving for the mission. And I'm excited.



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Ya'll we do it for the one. For your friend and your co-worker and my neighbor and your cousin and waiter...we do it because we want to see a Gospel awakening in our community that is carried to the ends of the earth!

We need about 150 people at Providence Rd to commit to that 8am service. And I'm gonna be there with you. You are making a missional move with your seat. Not only that, I need to ask everyone at all 3 services to attend a service and serve a service. The elders have decided it's time to look for our next facility for Providence Rd, so we are on the hunt here in this area but we aren't waiting on a facility to make room to reach people. So, from September 10 to next summer (like an 8am class) I need you to consider making this move and Lord willing He will reveal a facility solution by then.

Everybody has a move. Right now I'm telling you about it so you can pray about it. Talk to your community group and maybe ya'll decide to attend and serve together. Whatever it is, everybody has a move. We'll talk more throughout the summer about it.

SERMON Intro

Ok let's get into God's word and see what He has for us. Today we are in 2 Samuel 16 - 18. That's right, 3 chapters. This is kind of part 2 of a 2 part sermon that began last week because we are looking at the struggle for the throne between David and

his son Absalom. And man what we are seeing is that even though God has anointed David for the throne, Absalom is determined to put himself on the throne. This isn't something God has said should be. When David came to the throne God chose him, anointed him as the king, and blessed him as he went in. But Absalom is doing this all on his own. He believes HE deserves the throne.

And this right here is a wonderful picture of present day. Man, we in the postmodern west have taken SELF and put it on the throne of our lives. We've decided collectively as a culture that the individual knows best and has the right to determine even what TRUTH is. So we say things like live YOUR TRUTH. And if it's TRUE for you then it's true. And the rest of human history is like WHAT? Truth used to be something you went and got from a trusted source. Christianity, Islam, Judaism...these were trusted sources of truth but now...the individual is the only trusted source. See what we've done. Just like Absalom in our passage we've arrogantly put ourselves on the throne. There are very few people as arrogant as Absalom in the whole bible. We saw that last week and will see it again today. And in his arrogance and his thirst for control and power he believes he, not God's anointed, should be on the throne of God's kingdom. And this leads to his downfall.

And the case I'm going to make today is you and I aren't meant for the throne of our lives. There IS a throne. There is no doubt



about that. There is a spot in our lives for something that gets top billing. And we are meant to serve a king that sits on that throne. (NT talks about it also in terms of master / serve. God & Money. You will serve one.) And we humans put all kinds of things on that throne. And whatever is on the throne gives orders. We put people, we put relationships, we put career, we put approval of mom or dad. And the rest of our lives obey the king and everything else has to adjust to what the king says. So if career is on the throne, then king career demands my marriage & my family & my friendships & my church ALL have to adjust to what king career says. Gotta give my best 55 hours to work & you better not question king career! I will get defensive. That's how you know career is on the throne. It's how you know ANYTHING is on the throne. You get defensive when this part of your life is questioned.

Today many of us put OURSELVES on that throne. I will rule my life best. I know ME best. I know my truth. Culture CHAMPIONS this. The existence of PRIDE month is a great example. YOU determine who you are & be proud of it. You are king or queen & BE PROUD of that. We celebrate YOU BEING ULTIMATE AUTHORITY IN YOUR LIFE.

And the message of Christianity is...that honestly is offensive because it's humbling - is that you aren't meant for your own throne. And because you aren't meant to be there you shouldn't stay there. You don't have the strength or wisdom or

even...listen...you don't actually love YOU enough to rule your life well. And eventually if you stay on the throne, you will ruin your life.

You aren't meant to be on the throne, but Jesus is. Good news: He is a good and loving ruler. Better & more loving than you & He created your throne for Him. We'll talk about that more as we get into this passage. Basically I'm going to walk through this and make a few observations about the blessing that comes when Jesus is on the throne of your life.

15 Now Absalom and all the Israelites came to Jerusalem. Ahithophel was also with him. 16 When David's friend Hushai the Archite came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!" 17 "Is this your loyalty to your friend?" Absalom asked Hushai. "Why didn't you go with your friend?"

18 "Not at all," Hushai answered Absalom. "I am on the side of the one that the Lord, this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen. I will stay with him. 19 Furthermore, whom will I serve if not his son? As I served in your father's presence, I will also serve in yours."

Ok so if you are new to the story, we arrive today with Absalom having taken the throne. And the other two guys mentioned here prove critical in his fate. Ahithophel is the traitor. He was



loyal to David...then he betrayed David and is now on Absalom's side. But Hushai...Hushai is the one loyal to David who is pretending to be on Absalom's side. In other words, this is your spy. You like spy stuff then you gotta read these 3 chapters. They are awesome.

20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give me your advice. What should we do?"

21 Ahithophel replied to Absalom, "Sleep with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. When all Israel hears that you have become repulsive to your father, everyone with you will be encouraged." 22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he slept with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

He wants to leave no doubt...that there is NO CHANCE of reconciliation between Absalom and David. Like a permanent burn the bridge kind of moment...Ahithophel says go up on the roof and sleep with your father's concubines. That's a statement. A declaration that the new king is here.

23 Now the advice Ahithophel gave in those days was like someone asking about a word from God — such was the regard that both David and Absalom had for Ahithophel's advice.

Now there's a word of warning in that sentence. Ahithophel was regarded as a trusted advisor. And he gave Absalom advice that DOOMED HIM! Leviticus 20:11 says that if you have sex with your father's wife you are to be put to death! And Ahithophel is **advising** this? That's a problem. And here's what I want to tell you. That's not the main point today B/C the main point is put Jesus on the throne - but is certainly an application of the main point:

Always measure a word from someone else against the word of God

Whether it's a friend or your community group leader or me. Look, I've devoted my life to try and say clearly what God says from scripture BUT, I'm not God I'm a fallible human being. Take what I'm saying and measure it against God's word. Because sometimes people give ungodly counsel and slap God's name on it, sometimes people think they know God's word and just don't. So they'll confidently say something like "well the bible says..." when it simply doesn't. So what do I tell you all the time? GET TO KNOW GOD'S WORD! In fact I'm teaching a course in August called "**how to study the bible**." Open to anyone but sign up so we know who is coming.

But this is one of the blessings of Jesus being on the throne of your life. He offers you a truth you can trust. **Jesus is the good**



king who offers a good and unchanging word to you in the bible.

Other kings don't do that. They change. They are fickle. YOU are fickle. But not Jesus.

Let's keep going. What happens next is Ahithophel gives some counsel on how to defeat David. He knows David well. Knows David is a strong warrior so he devises a plan to get him NOW while he's on the run. Everybody thinks it's good advice. Even Absalom. But then the craziest thing happens - Absalom asks for HUSHAI's advice. And he even tells Hushai Ahithophel's whole plan. And says "what do you think about it? Do you like it? Got a better plan?" This right here is crazy. But we'll see this is actually not crazy at all.

So, Hushai seizes the moment and says

7 Hushai replied to Absalom, "The advice Ahithophel has given this time is not good."

Normally, he's spot on. But man, this time...he's off. I KNOW David. And you are going to need to summon EVERY MAN in the kingdom. As numerous as the sand by the sea. And they need to follow YOU out into battle. They will get scared when the battle gets tough because David is a good warrior. But they will follow YOU. Hushai is stroking his ego. And buying David time to prepare for battle. It's brilliant if it works. And then verse

14 tells us why Hushai's plan works. It tells us why Hushai even has an audience with Absalom.

14 Since the Lord had decreed that Ahithophel's good advice be undermined in order to bring about Absalom's ruin, Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than Ahithophel's advice."

See the author peels back the curtain to show us the hidden hand of God. The lord had decreed Ahithophel's good advice be undermined...I want you to see something. Some time prior to this, David had learned Ahithophel had betrayed him and gone over to the dark side. So David prayed "Lord," David pleaded, "please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!" -- 2 Samuel 15:31

David prayed...and the Lord answered. God heard David's prayer and answered it. He did more than David wanted though as we will see in a minute. But listen when David was told he was betrayed he didn't strategize. He prayed. He knew unless God intervened he was in great trouble. Ahithophel knew him too well. He knew the best way to take David down. But God is working. Man let me ask you a question AND offer you some comfort. What is the content of your prayers these days? By that I mean if God said YES to every single one of your prayers from the past week...what would be different in the world? Would your life be a little more comfortable and your



Chick-fil-a nuggets be blessed? How many lost people would God have saved this past week if he said YES to all of your prayers? How many people would have been healed? How many Christians would not have fallen prey to Satan's lies? Man ARE YOU on the sidelines WATCHING & ANXIOUSLY WONDERING what God is going to do? When God calls you to get in the game by PRAYING!

There is no prayer too great or too small for God. And the comfort - is God is powerfully working all things for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. In other words, things may seem for you like they did for David. Ahithophel's betrayal seemingly seals David's fate. But God. David is toast...BUT GOD. That's the hope of the gospel. You were lost....but GOD.

Maybe you feel like God is all you have. Maybe that's why you are finally in church today. Because God's all you have. And I'm just here to say Amen. He's all you need. The hidden hand of God is all over this account and verse 14 is here to remind you and I His hand is all over your life as well. Things might be out of your control, but not out of His. Might be beyond your ability but not beyond His. Old Hymn...

What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!

We'll have a time of prayer later in the service. A time for you to respond. Maybe you need to take something to God in prayer you've been THINKING about but not giving to God in prayer. **Jesus is the good king who hears us and remains in control when we feel all hope is lost.**

Ok, so we get back to our passage and Absalom listens to Hushai. Then through some HIGH level spy stuff Hushai sends word to David about Absalom's plan. So David gets away, crosses the Jordan River and hooks up with some relatives who provide for David & his people. Another blessing of God for David.

Well after this happens, the author gives us a brief aside to tell us how Ahithophel's story ends.

23 When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He set his house in order and hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his father's tomb.

The friend who betrays the Lord's anointed is now pushed out by the ones he sided with and so he goes and hangs himself. DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR!? Well if you know the story of Jesus it certainly does. Ahithophel is the Judas of the OT. And he is one of many individuals in this account ALL pointing us to Jesus. We'll pull more on that thread in a minute.



While this is happening, David preps his army for battle. With Absalom coming to him David gets to basically pick the location for battle. David is a brilliant military strategist AND gets to choose the battlefield. He also knows Absalom is bringing a vast army WHICH MEANS....and this is Hushai's brilliance....Abs has probably gone and just plucked every dude with an ax & pitchfork and made them a soldier. So David knows at the first sign of fear they are going to scatter. Just like Hushai said to Absalom.

David wants to lead his army out but they advise him against it so he says...

5 The king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "Treat the young man Absalom gently for my sake." All the people heard the king's orders to all the commanders about Absalom.

This is the father's heart. It's absurd. Absalom has betrayed his father and split the kingdom. This civil war is Absalom's fault. Treat him gently? What love David has even still. Even still. Well, the battle goes David's way.

6 Then David's forces marched into the field to engage Israel in battle, which took place in the forest of Ephraim. 7 Israel's army was defeated by David's soldiers, and the slaughter there was vast that day — twenty thousand dead. 8 The battle spread

over the entire area, and that day the forest claimed more people than the sword.

David's chosen battlefield, David's mighty men. David's shrewd leadership...Israel didn't stand a chance. And the forest claiming more than the sword there - That's not like the trees came to life or something. It's not like LOTR where the ENTS rise up. It's just a way of saying the terrain was fit for David's men and their guerilla warfare. Watch what happens next. We go from zoomed out on the whole battle to zoom in on Absalom.

9 Absalom was riding on his mule when he happened to meet David's soldiers. When the mule went under the tangled branches of a large oak tree, Absalom's head was caught fast in the tree. The mule under him kept going, so he was suspended in midair. 10 One of the men saw him and informed Joab. He said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!"

Maybe it was his hair caught - that seems to be the general consensus. Pretty surprising. Joab replies why didn't you kill him? I would have paid you. And the guy says yeah you can pay me all you want bro BUT, David said don't harm him and if I had, when David showed up you would have abandoned me.

14 Joab said, "I'm not going to waste time with you!" He then took three spears in his hand and thrust them into Absalom's chest. While Absalom was still alive in the oak tree, 15 ten



young men who were Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him, and killed him. 16 Joab blew the ram's horn, and the troops broke off their pursuit of Israel because Joab restrained them. 17 They took Absalom, threw him into a large pit in the forest, and raised up a huge mound of stones over him. And all Israel fled, each to his tent.

Then the next verse is this flashback right here at Absalom's death.

18 When he was alive, Absalom had taken a pillar and raised it up for himself in the King's Valley, since he thought, "I have no son to preserve the memory of my name." So he named the pillar after himself. It is still called Absalom's Monument today.

Absalom is the epitome of arrogance. The picture of pride. There's no way to read his story and NOT see it. But just in case we haven't, right here in verse 18 the author makes it clear. Absalom had built a monument to himself. And now this man so full of himself is helpless, dangling in a tree. And Joab knows this is how it has to end. There is no homecoming for Absalom because justice must be served.

So Absalom is killed. And this final thing about his monument is a warning to every reader. The way my buddy Andrew Hopper said about Absalom here: **"If your life's work is building a monument to yourself it will bury you."** It's true. You are not

God's anointed one for the throne of your life. And if you try to be, you may stand on the rooftop of the palace for your 15 minutes, but in the end you will not find LIFE. You will find exhaustion and anxiety and ultimately you will be forever cut off from God. And this is a warning to you! Put God's king on the throne!

Well, news comes to David of what has happened and it just breaks David.

33 The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber above the city gate and wept. As he walked, he cried, "My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!"

This is the 3rd son of David's that has died. David's heart breaks. The entire time up to this point he's referred to Absalom as "the young man." But now...5 times he says...My son. My son. He loves his son. Even still. He wishes he could take his place but he can't. In fact chapter 19 opens and even though David's army has won, the mood in camp feels like defeat. Because David casts a pretty big shadow and he is swallowed up by grief. In fact Joab says, 'hey man you better go encourage the troops. They are starting to get confused and a little upset about how you are responding to this victory.' And nowhere is Joab rebuked for rebuking the king.



See, even though Joab just blatantly disregards David's order about Absalom and kills him, Joab is not painted in a negative light. And it feels as if Joab and David represent two tensions that are central to the bible. God's Justice and God's Mercy. See God is a God of justice so sin has to be paid for. That's Joab. He KNOWS absalom has to die for his sin. But then there's David...who loves his rebellious son and even though he knows he deserves punishment he wants his son to be spared! Even wishes he could take his place!

And the story ends with that tension not being resolved.

And thus ends the sad story of David and Absalom. A prideful son who rebels against his father. The king anointed by God who wins victory for his people at the gut wrenching cost of losing his son. A king unable to save the son he loves.

Ya'll this account is such a powerful foreshadowing of the gospel account. Like David, God looks on us, His rebellious children and with a father's heart desires mercy for us. And just as Absalom's sin had to be paid for, so the justice of God says our sins have to be paid for, too.

Just like Ahithophel betrayed David, Judas betrays Jesus and then when he gets cast out by the people he sided with, he goes and hangs himself.

And then there's Absalom...the son of the king who was hung on a tree **against** his will and was pierced **for his own** transgressions. Absalom died for what he deserved.

But that's where the gospel tells the better story. In the end, David could not save Absalom's life. **When Absalom died David said, "Oh my son, Absalom; my son, my son, my son. I wish I could have died in your place."** You should hear in those words Jesus' cry for you. On the way to the cross, Jesus said, **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how many times I wanted to gather you to myself."** Matthew 23:37

Put your name in the place of Jerusalem....

David wanted to die in Absalom's place, but he couldn't, (at least he couldn't do that and save the kingdom.) Jesus **could die in our place,** and did.

Jesus went willingly to the cross...was pierced for OUR transgressions...and died the death WE deserved. And though He was put in the grave and covered by a stone, death had swallowed one that wasn't his. And three days later He got out of the grave defeating death and ultimately reclaimed His place on the throne.

See we are the rebellious sons & daughters of the one true king. We are the ones who have put ourselves on the throne



instead of God's anointed one Jesus. And there is no peace with God without justice for sin. Either God's justice can fall on your head like it did for Absalom or it can fall on Christ's. It is at the cross of Christ where the justice and mercy of God meet. For God so loved the world...that's His mercy....that He gave His one and only son....that's the justice. Somebody had to die. That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

And what I'm trying this whole series in 1 & 2 Samuel to get you to see is that this is all pointing to our desperate need for a savior king. Listen, the world tells you 'put yourself on the throne'. And the promise is fulfillment and peace. But what extreme self-ishness promises, only radical self-less-ness can deliver. That's the gospel. You can't save you. You gotta give your throne away to Jesus. And when you yield to Him you experience His selfless love for you. His self-sacrificing love for you!

Jesus is the true and better David. He is the real King; the ultimate Father, and that's because He's not just the King, He is the Redeemer and Savior.

Time to respond - Time to put Jesus on the throne. Today.



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