**HOW GOD BRINGS THE BANISHED BACK**

**II SAMUEL 13:28-29, 37-39; 14:1-14,21, 23-24**

 As David walks on top of his castle he is always looking the same way. It is never *northward*, where Hermon lifts his snow-crowned head; never *southward*, where Bethlehem lies, and Hebron where he was crowned; never *westward*, where the great sea rolled; but *always eastward*, toward the Jordan, toward the mountains of Moab, because over there somewhere is the banished Absalom.

 David is yearning over his son Absalom. Though Absalom is a criminal, the father would love to forgive him; but justice and honor forbade his doing so.

 It has kept him from reaching out to Absalom.

 How eager was he to do it: but then, you know, he was a king. Therefore he hesitated to give way to his parental feelings, to set aside the claims of public justice, and exercise his royal prerogative of showing mercy toward the guilty.

 He was in a dilemma. Do I follow my heart, or do I do what the Law says I am supposed to do?

 For you see, Absalom had murdered his ½ brother Amnon, because Amnon had forced himself upon Absalom’s sister Tamar.

 Joab sees this war going on inside of David, and being fond of Absalom connives a way for Absalom to come back.

 BUT LET’S LOOK AT THIS STORY FOR A MOMENT, AND THEN SPIRITUALIZE IT.

**I. MAN’S CONDITION**

 Absalom is living at Geshur. It is not his native place, it is not his fatherland; he is there in *exile* and a *foreigner*; he is living a life of banishment. For you see, by his own free act Absalom broke the Law.

 Nobody forced him, made him, or even asked him.

 Page 2

 As a transgressor Absalom is under sentence of the law, and in order to *escape* that sentence he is living at Geshur, a banished man. He has banished himself; his *conscience* acknowledges the crime that he has committed, and the justice of the *doom* that hangs over him, so he flees from his country, from his father’s house.

 Because of his sin he separates himself from all that he knows and loves.

 **Here we have a picture of man’s state as a sinner.** Man, as a sinner, is living in banishment. It is of his own accord that he departs from God, and *seeks* to hide himself from Him.

 Adam and Eve sinned, and hid themselves from the presence of God.

 Cain sinned, and *went out* from the presence of God;

 Jacob sinned against his *father* and *brother*, and went out from his home into far-off Mesopotamia.

 Gehazi sinned, and went out from *Elisha’s* presence a leper as white as snow.

 Peter sinned, and went out from the presence of Jesus, and wept bitterly.

 Judas sinned, and went out, and it was *night*.

 Sin always leads out; always away from the presence of God.

 Isaiah 59:2, “*But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*”

 And because we have all broken His law, willfully and wickedly; and because we have rebelled against the majesty of heaven; we are, therefore, in our natural estate, banished ones, expelled from His love and favour, waiting the time when the sentence of His wrath shall be fulfilled, and “*Depart, ye cursed*,” shall *flash* its *lightning flame* into our spirits.

 Banished from God.

 Banished from peace.

 Banished from heaven.

 Page 3

 That is the condition of the sinner.

 Because of that willful act, sometimes this banishment will make itself felt: there are times in which the soul of man will cast a longing thought back upon the Father’s house, like the prodigal in the far-off land, when the *famine* pinches, when the *pleasures* of sin have worn themselves out, and a *sense of* *want* presses; then the memory of home comes up.

 These longings are but the memories of home, the sighing of men in banishment, for though the banishment has gone on through *long* generations, the *memories* ofhome and of fellowship in the Father’s house have not altogether faded from the soul.

 It is not because God has ceased to love us and long for our salvation that sin makes us unhappy and that the sinner is the *victim* of remorse and *fails* to find peace; it is rather that man was made to find *happiness* in the presence of God and in the *consciousness* of harmony with him.

 Oh, what a condition man has sometimes found himself in.

**II. GOD’S LOVE FOR THE BANISHED**

 David was Absalom’s father and Absalom’s king; and the two relationships fought against each other in his heart. The king had to think of law and justice; the father cried out for his son.

 The young man’s offence had not *affected* the father’s heart.

 AND THOUGH YOU MIGHT BE HERE THIS MORNING, AND HAVE TURNED YOUR BACK ON GOD. HE STILL LOVES YOU!

 Ezekiel 18:32, “*For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*”

 Zechariah 9:12, “*Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope:*”

 Page 4

 II Peter 3:9, “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward,*

*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*”

 God showed us *how far* He will go to reconcile the banished to Himself in the 3 parable of “Lost Things”. 1st, the woman who lost one of her 10 pieces of silver, and lighted her candle, and took her broom and swept every corner of her house until she found it.

 So God with the broom of the Cross sweeps the dark places of the earth to find that which was lost.

 In the Lost Sheep, the shepherd goes over dark mountains, and long wildernesses to find that lost sheep.

 In the story of the Prodigal Son, it was the father who kept his eye on the road everyday, and who rejoiced when his son come home.

**III. GOD’S PROVISION FOR THE BANISHED**

 The text says, God doth “devise means”.

 In this story you see there is a 3rd person brought upon the scene. The king says nothing of bringing Absalom back. Absalom sends no request to be restored; but Joab takes the matter up, and by the *political craft*, of which he was such a thorough master, he gains his end.

 Now, in the means that God has devised, a third person appears, one comes *between* the Father and the banished one. He sees the Father’s heart *yearning* over the lost; He knows that while God *hates* the sin He *loves* the sinner, and so he undertakes the matter. Therefore He cries out, “*Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.*”

 **Here is the means that He doth devise.** “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

 “***Yet doth He devise means.***”

 The gospel message is just the declaring of this. The difficulty is *overcome*; the barrier is *removed*; the way is *open*; there is nothing now to prevent God from *receiving* back the sinner, nothing to prevent the sinner from *coming back* in confidence to God.

 Page 5

 For you see with God one thing leads on to another; where doth this banishment lead?

 Why, it leads to a *thorn-covered* earth; yes, but also to a *thorn-crowned* Saviour.

 It *leads* to much toil and bitterness of men’s hearts, but it also leads to God’s labour and Christ’s travail of soul, of which He shall be satisfied.

 Our salvation is of God. If he does not find means to *cover* sin and *influence* our evil hearts, there is *no hope*.

 We cannot, and are unwilling.

 He deviseth means.

 Hence the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the Holy Spirit to convict, the appointment of faith as the condition to *receive*, and of preaching as the *instrumentality*, are all ascribed to the wisdom and goodness of God.

 **He has made the provision, and He can restore your soul.**

**CON:**

 By trickery the pity of the king was roused, and Joab fetched home the banished from Geshur, but for 2 whole years Absalom dwelt in Jerusalem and saw not the face of the king.

 Though Absalom was back, restoration was not all the way complete and accomplished.

 Oh, not so is it that our Father deals with us. Listen; let the heart take hold of it: “*When he was yet a great way off his father saw him and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.*” And when Christ cried out amid the gathering darkness of Calvary, “*It is finished*,” it was *done*, completely, gloriously done!

 A bridge between Heaven and earth was built!

 There were 2 old miners in an English coal mine who once lost their way. Their lights went out, and among miles of dark tunnels traversing each other they were in danger of losing their lives.

 Page 6

 After wandering in vain for awhile, one of them said, “*Let us sit perfectly quiet, and see if we cannot feel which way the air is moving, because it always moves toward the shaft.*” There they sat for a long time, when all at once one of them felt a slight tough on his cheek, and he sprang to his feet and said, “*I felt it.*” They went in the direction in which the air was moving, and reached the shaft.

 I am sure that there is a breath from the Almighty God this morning that is blowing upon your soul.

 If you will but rise and follow it, it will lead you to the very mercy seat of a loving God who has devised a means, by the shedding of His perfect Son’s blood, that you might be restored.

 **There was no hesitation, no unwillingness on the part of Absalom to return.**

 **What about you today?**

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