



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“SHIMEI, THE MAN WHO STONED HIS KING”

John Galbreath
Bible Study Series

Text: II Samuel 16:5-14
Date: November 27, 1977 (Advent)

About Westminster's Galbreath Bible Study Series:

This lesson is one taken from a sermon preached by John Galbreath at Westminster Presbyterian Church on November 27, 1977 (Advent).

To complete the lesson, we suggest that you begin by reading the designated Bible passage (II Samuel 16:5-14).

Next, review the outline of the sermon. Reflect on the chosen scripture and how you would “fill in” the remainder of the message from the chosen passage.

Then, review the study questions posed about the lesson — whether by yourself or in your small group.

Finally, share your thoughts on the Galbreath Bible Study blog on the Westminster Intranet.

I. Introduction

A. David was eminently successful against his enemies – it was his friends who nearly did him in.

1. The closest he came to utter defeat was at the hand of his own son, heir to the throne, Absalom.

a) *Absalom could not wait for age to vacate the throne and took matters into his own hand.*

b) *An astute politician, he nurtured unrest against David.*

c) *Militarily, he was canny and almost overnight forced David out of the capitol.*

2. Absalom's forces were in control in Israel to the North and Judah to the South.

a) *His only hope of keeping the crown lay in retreat to the East across Jordan where, in the wilderness, he might regroup, draw his allies about him, and challenge the armies of his son.*

3. The road from Jerusalem to the Jordan Valley follows a ravine.

II. The Curse of Shimei

A. Shimei – his motives.

1. Of the tribe of Saul, David's predecessor.

a) *The highest loyalty of many was to the tribe, not to the kingdom.*

(1) The monarchy was new, and the first king had been a Benjaminite, and they assumed the dynasty would continue in their tribe.

b) *Absalom had deftly exploited the tribal loyalties to use them against David.*

2. He was sincere.

a) *There were grave risks in his criticism.*

(1) While the Lion of Judah was wounded, his fangs were yet sharp.

(2) Abishai's offer to kill him was not in jest.

b) *Scripture recounts over again the absence of any complicity on David's part in the death of Saul or his household.*

(1) To underline this, there are such accounts as the occasion when David could have slain him in the wilderness cave, yet spared Saul's life.

c) *We believe what we need to believe.*

3. The jackals gather.

a) *When the lion roams the forest, he is king of beasts, but once he has been blooded, the jackals gather round.*

b) *Shimei would never have thought of confronting David a week earlier.*

c) *Every leader who stays in authority for a period of time will make blunders, will offend certain persons.*

(1) The hostilities inevitably accumulate.

(2) They are quiescent so long as the leader does not display any weakness.

(3) The leader may even assume he has no detractors.

(4) But let him or her make a serious blunder or be seriously challenged and all the sleeping jackals rush for the carcass.

d) *Since the Bert Lance affair, the criticism of our president has taken on a snide quality that it did not have before.*

(1) When the Director of Budget could not keep his own checkbook in balance, this was a weakness that every American could understand.

III. David's Response

A. Abishai expressed what must have been David's first visceral response: "Why should this dead dog curse my lord, the King. Let me go over and take off his head!"

1. Glandular reaction is normal within us each.

a) *The person who has no reaction to criticism must be dull-witted or contemptuous of his fellow human beings.*

2. David had been a man of high passion.

a) *His sins were never those of meanness of spirit – they were the sins of misdirected passion.*

b) *Passion had drawn men and women to him – his strength and his weakness.*

B. "My own son seeks my life; how much more now this Benjaminite!"

1. If he could not command the loyalty of his family, why should he expect the loyalty of his opponents?

a) *What a tragic and insightful response!*

C. "Let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord has bidden him!"

1. David could see God's hand in his own defeat!

2. He had some cursing due him.

a) *The fact that Shimei cursed him for the wrong reason was not important.*

3. What can we learn from our detractors?

a) *The glandular reaction is to be expected – but once the juices have quieted, what is it that is true from the mouth of our critics?*

D. “It may be that the Lord will repay me with good for the cursing of me today.”

1. A teenager of our congregation is living through a dread disease. “I’ve learned so much through this experience!”
 - a) *Her apparent unmitigated tragedy has been a source of grace to her and to all of us who love her.*
 - b) *“For all that is past – thanks. For all that lies ahead – ‘yes!’”*

E. David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the ridge (above him) and cursed him as he went, and threw stones at him and flung dust.”

1. What a dramatic manner in which to describe the depth of David’s humiliation.
2. Yet it revealed a magnificence of spirit that was never found in a triumphal march.
3. His real task was to get beyond Jordan as rapidly as possible and not be distracted by those who would insult him.
 - a) *The price of being a lion is that one will have his tail twisted.*

F. David’s character.

1. He knew his own flaws – see Psalm 51.
2. He had internalized the forgiveness of God.
 - a) *God’s grace was a living reality.*
3. He was never surprised by flaws in others.
 - a) *A healthy cynicism is essential to steel us for crisis.*
 - b) *He was never more a king!*

IV. Sequel

David defeated Absalom, and upon return, was met by Shimei with 1000 kinsmen. Once more, David forgave him, thus healing the broken body of the nation with amnesty.

Study Questions -- Part I

Bible Reading: II Samuel 16:5-14

II Samuel 16:5 through 8 say: ⁵ When King David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came. ⁶ He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and at his left. ⁷ Thus Shimei said when he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow! ⁸The LORD has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. And behold, you are *taken* in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed!"

- Have there been times when you cursed others you felt were not behaving as true Christians? How did you handle those feelings?

II Samuel 16:9 through 14 say: ⁹ Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over now and cut off his head." ¹⁰ But the king said, "What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah? If he curses, and if the LORD has told him, 'Curse David,' then who shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" ¹¹ Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my son who came out from me seeks my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him. ¹² Perhaps the LORD will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day." ¹³ So David and his men went on the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside parallel with him and as he went he cursed and cast stones and threw dust at him. ¹⁴ The king and all the people who were with him arrived weary and he refreshed himself there.

- When you have felt "afflicted," how have you turned to God for relief?

Study Questions -- Part II

Sermon :

- I.A. Have you ever felt that your friends caused you more concerns than did others? How did you deal with that?
- II.A.1.a. If someone looked at your life, where would they say your highest loyalty lies?
- II.A.2.c. What in your life do you believe because you need to?
- II.A.3.c. Have there been times in your life when you were in a position of leadership? What blunders did you make? What did you do to put them right?
- II.A.4. What modern day leaders have made blunders? How does it make you feel about those people?
- III.C.1. Think about moments of defeat in your own life. Have you ever felt that it was God punishing you? How did you deal with those defeats?
- III.C.3. What can you learn from your detractors?
- III.D. What trials are you facing that God may repay with good?
- III.D.1. Have you known someone with this kind of unfailingly positive attitude? What impact did that have on how you view your own life?
- III.F. What lessons can you learn from David that you can apply in your own life?