

In Nomine Iesu

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Text: 2 Samuel 16: 5-14

Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came.⁶ And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left.⁷ Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue!"⁸ "The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you *are caught* in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"⁹ Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!"¹⁰ But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"¹¹ And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now *may this* Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him."¹² "It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day."¹³ And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust.¹⁴ Now the king and all the people who *were* with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there.

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ,

David's son, Absalom, had forced David to leave Jerusalem. Absalom was leading a rebellion against King David. He had declared himself king after stealing the hearts of the people of Israel over many years. David wanted to avoid making Jerusalem the location for a bloody battle of civil war and so he leaves the city, along with his trusted followers. It is as David journeys out of Jerusalem during this time of trial that we hear this episode with Shimei.

We are told that Shimei was a man from Saul's family. Saul had been king before David. But due to Saul's disobedience to the Lord, his apostasy, the Lord had taken the kingship away from Saul and his family, and instead anointed David to be king over all Israel. David had never sought to usurp the authority or leadership of Saul. Saul's demise and the loss of the kingship for his family's

descendants had nothing to do with David, but rather with Saul's own loss of faith in the God of Israel.

Yet Shimei has apparently been harboring a grudge against David for years. Shimei believes that the reason for his own family's loss of the kingship was due to David's intrigues. So as David leaves Jerusalem in advance of Absalom's army Shimei takes advantage of David's situation to curse him and taunt him. Shimei would never dared to have spoken this way if he didn't think that David was going to lose. But now he mocks the king's weakness and shame.

Some of the men with David are more than willing to close the mouth of Shimei by taking off his head. But David will have none of that. Years before, David had brought great shame upon himself, upon his office as king, and upon the people of Israel, through his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband, Uriah. At that time David had confessed his sin to Nathan the prophet and been forgiven. However, there were consequences for David. The Lord told David through Nathan:

“Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.”¹¹ “Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.’¹² ‘For you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’”¹³ So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.”¹⁴ “However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *who is* born to you shall surely die.”

When David heard the curses and ridicule of Shimei he responded with humility. David goes so far as to state that it was the Lord who had allowed Shimei to do this. Therefore David will accept these as what he is owed – it is only by God's

grace that he continues as king. And he walks on silently, as Shimei throws rocks at him, kicks dust at him, and rains down curses upon him.

Shimei's words to David only made David's situation worse. He was already grieved that his son Absalom should betray him, and that his very life is in danger. Now, in addition to all of that, David must endure the public ridicule given by Shimei. Events are piling on David.

Events have a way of doing that to us. One thing happens, then another, suddenly we're swamped with things that overwhelm us, that make us wonder about God's care for us and our loved ones. One day David is ruling Israel in comparative peace, the next day he must escape the capital city for his life, while accepting the curses shouted at him. One day we can be in cruise mode in our lives, the next we can be dealing with sickness, death, unexpected massive bills due, friends turning on us unexpectedly, family members hurting one another, and any number of other things, certainly including our own sins, that combine to press us down, crushing our spirit, bringing us doubt where we once had hope, bringing us sorrow where we once were joyful, bringing us shame where once we were confident.

All of these things come upon us as the results of living in world where sin still has dominion over hearts and lives, where death still intrudes in all its hatefulness, where the devil still brings dissension wherever there is harmony, and war wherever there is peace. That is why we need always to keep identifying the sources of the troubles as sin, death, and Satan, and never forget that these remain for us to deal with again and again – despite the facts of salvation, rescue, forgiveness, and mercy brought by the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

There was an insightful post on the internet that I believe addresses this situation very well, describing just what is happening, and where, finally our hope is found:

That fight – acceptance and battle – is the normal life of the believer. I fight. Jesus will finish the work. I will groan, and do battle, climb the mountain of Holiness with wounds and brokenness and holy battle scars,

but I will climb it, since Christ is in me. The Gospel assures victory, but to say I stand in a present victory as I "kill" sin is a serious wrong turn.

What does this fight look like? It is a **bloody mess**, I'm telling you. There is a lot of failure in it. It is not an easy way to the heavenly city. It is a battle where we are brought down again, and again and again. Brought down by what we are, and what we continually discover ourselves to be. And we only are "victorious" in the victory of Jesus, a victory that is ours by faith, not by sight. In fact, that fight is probably described just as accurately by the closing words of Romans 7 as by the "victorious" words of Romans 8.

Romans 7:23-25 ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ **Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?** ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

I fall down. I get up....and believe. Over and over again. That's as good as it gets in this world. This life of faith, is a battle full of weakness and brokenness. The only soldiers in this battle are wounded ones. There are moments of total candor- I am a "wretched man" living in a "body" of death. **Denying this, spinning this, ignoring this or distorting this reality is nothing but trouble in the true Christian experience.** The sin we are killing in Romans 8 is, in a sense, ourselves. Not some demon or serpent external to us. Our battle is with ourselves, and embracing this fact is the compass and foundation of the Gospel's power in our lives.

What this author recognizes is that the life of struggle for the people of God does not have an end as long as we are tied to our sinful flesh and this world. But this does not lead us to despair. Rather, it brings us again and again to the promises of Jesus Christ and the victory He Himself has won for us. Who delivers us? Jesus Christ our Lord. This is not a one time thing, but it is our way of life, our way of going through the time given to us here and now. This doesn't mean there is never any joy or hope or good – they are here for us, always, but always in faith in

our Savior, the Son of God who lived, died, and rose again for us, for our salvation. All these things that pile on us, all these events, all our sin, these finally push us to look at the cross of our Savior and the fact that He keeps giving us forgiveness, He keeps giving us His mercy, undeserved though it is. He keeps on doing for us what we cannot do, thereby keeping us with Him as learn to lean on Him more and more.

The ancestor of Jesus, King David, confessed that sin was finally against God, and though God might still chastise him, he would accept it and not allow it to push him from faith. As David would write in Psalm 40:

I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry.²
 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, *And* established my steps.³ He has put a new song in my mouth – Praise to our God; Many will see *it* and fear, And will trust in the LORD.⁴ Blessed *is* that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

God help us to learn patience and hope during the times when events pile on us and cause us to doubt. God's promises to us remain true, and blessed are you as you trust Him to be bring you through even the worst that sin, death, and devil throw at you.

I pray now, heartily, O Lord, That You would never leave me
 Nor take from me Your holy Word Lest sin and Satan grieve me.

My sin and shame In Your dear name

Are washed and cleansed forever.

In You I must Put all my trust,

Then death shall hurt me never.

(ELH 430:8)

Amen.