

2Samuel 16:1–14

“Gracious Providence in Believers' Pain”

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How was David able to respond so patiently and humbly to Shimei's attacks? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. 2Samuel 16:1–14 prepares us for the first serial reading of morning worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these fourteen verses of holy Scripture, we learn that David's hope in Yahweh's forgiveness directed him to deal first and foremost with the Lord of astounding and surprising mercy.

Wednesday, June 30, 2021 • Read 2Samuel 16:1–14

Questions from the Scripture text: Where has David reached in v1? Whom does he see now? What does he have? What does the king ask him (v2)? How does Ziba answer? What does the king ask him now (v3)? How does Ziba answer that? What does the king do in v4? How does Ziba respond? To where does David come in v5? Who is there? From what household? What was he doing as he came? What did he do now (v6)? To whom? What, specifically, was Shimei calling the king (v7)? What did he say is the reason for what is happening (v8)? Who else speaks up (v9)? What does he call Shimei? What does Abishai suggest as a solution to the Shimei cursing problem? How does David respond (v10)? What does he say is the reason Shimei is cursing? How does David summarize his current circumstances (v11)? Why are things this way (cf. 2Sam 12:10–12)? What hope does David still have (v12a)? And what may happen then (12b)? How did things proceed (v13)? What eventually happens in v14? What do they do about it?

We're still following David in these fourteen verses. In v1, we arrive a little past the top of the mountain. In v5 we arrive at Bahurim, and even though Shimei of the house of Saul thinks that's a good place to play dodge-stone (v6), David and his men don't get a whole lot further before they take a break because they're just too tired (v13–14).

In this final leg of the David clip, before the focus returns to Absalom in v15, the Spirit shows us a few more parts of David's pain.

Showing Mephibosheth covenant love had been David's great desire (cf. ch9), but Ziba shows up with saddled donkeys and salt for David's wounds. It's obviously a lie; no one in their right mind thinks Absalom wants anyone to be king but Absalom (v3), and Ziba himself doesn't go along with David but stays back with this wicked Shimei (cf. 19:17). It's actually Ziba who hedges his bets: a few raisins for the one side, a show of support for the other, and he figures to be well-positioned regardless of which administration comes out on top. Some snakes seem to be able to enjoy their status regardless of who's on the throne.

David shows himself gullible in v4. Easily moved by a bribe of sorts. Rushing to conclusions without hearing the other side (cf. 19:24–30). This too is judgment.

Shimei comes along, throwing curses (v5) and stones (v6) at David and the mighty men. That's pretty deluded, to attack the group that has wiped out many a fearsome giant or horde of Philistines. Like many self-assured attackers of the Lord's servants in His church throughout the centuries, he's very confident about his wholly inaccurate theory of what's going on spiritually (v8).

But David recognizes a hint of truth (v7) and receives from the Lord as much as is true from Shimei's words (v10–11). Clearly, Shimei is pain. But he is providential pain. How well the Lord's servants would do, if they could receive every attack in the providence of God; and, if there's any truth at all in any criticism, they would capitalize upon it by learning and growing as much as they can from it. How it frustrates the devil, when he seeks to attack, and ends up being used to sanctify (cf. Job)!

Abishai is also a pain to David here. Zeruiah (cf. v10) is David's sister, and the same fleshliness that he sees in her boys was at the root of his own disregard for Uriah's life. So while Abishai's plan is technically sound (v9; bodiless heads tend not to hurl curses, and headless bodies tend not to hurl stones), it is morally corrupt (v10a) and spiritually ignorant (v10b).

All this pain, however, is to a purpose. The text history of v12 is confused because the theology is difficult. As written, it says, "Maybe Yahweh will look on my iniquity, and Yahweh will repay me with good for his cursing this day." At some point the Jews began reading "tears" instead of "iniquity," and a number of translators have followed them.

But here is the marvelous truth: Yahweh is the kind of forgiving God, Who provides such atonement, that His grace is free to do good to sinful men! David's hope isn't that Yahweh will pretend the sin doesn't exist. David's hope is that Yahweh Who has forgiven his sin will also complete the chastening work of this trial, and restore His chastened servant. Believer's lives include pain of many kind, but since they have been forgiven in Christ, they too know this God Who uses every pain to do them good!

With whom have you been a schemer? To what schemers have you been gullible? About whom have you rushed to a wrong judgment? Who has criticized you recently? What hint of truth, if any, was there in it, from which you could benefit? What hope do you have in light of your sin? What is God doing to you?

Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH256 "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

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