

2 Samuel 12:24 - 13:39

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning folks. It's lovely to see the room so full, I have to say. Great.

! So today we're going to be continuing our periodical study through the books of Samuel, and we've come in our study as far as 2 Samuel and chapter 12. And with a fair wind today, well I certainly plan to read all the way through to the end of chapter 13.

Now what normally when I preach and prepare to preach, what normally happens is I spend the whole of the week prior just going through the text and reading it and picking out the things. And it's often on, it will be on the Saturday and sometimes a Sunday morning when God will say, this is the message, this is the theme. And I'm like, right, now it makes sense. This week was very different in that he gave it to me probably Tuesday, and I was struck by a very, very clear, overarching theme. And that is a contrast of the love of God with the love of man.

And that's going to be our focus today, because we're going to open at verse 24 in chapter 12, and we'll see how God loved Solomon. And so we're going to talk a bit about what that means, because we've already seen from the writer of this book how God is going to deal with Solomon.

[1 : 26] And then what we see as we plunge into chapter 13 is various examples of fake and false love, whether we're looking at Amnon and really its lust, whether we're looking at the weak love of David, which failed to protect his daughter and failed to discipline his sons, and then the corrupted love of Absalom, who loved his sister to a fault in that it morphed into wrath and vengeance.

So that's our theme. And obviously, as is my usual style, we'll pick up some tidbits as we go through as well. And hopefully we'll see some good points of application as well.

Now, in terms of the narrative context, which I know some of you won't have been with us for the whole of the series, we've got as far as seeing David become king, arguably the greatest king that Israel has.

He established Jerusalem as the capital. And we've seen, very importantly, the promises of God in chapter 7. And then after that, we've seen these victories that David had as he secured the land and made it safe.

And then we saw David prove that he is just a man, a sinner like all others, with his egregious sin with Bathsheba and with her husband Uriah.

[2 : 52] And now you may recall at that time, this passage. So chapter 12, verse 11 and 12, if you just look there, and it's on the screen as well, God said this, And this is what we start to see happening now.

So David did sin terribly. He did repent. And the Lord says, I've put away your sin and I've forgiven your sin. But there are consequences that remain.

And this is one. And we see them start to unfold now in our text. David has a big family. 2 Samuel 3, we read about six sons born to him in Hebron.

And then in 2 Samuel 5, verses 13 through 16, we read about 11 more in Jerusalem. That's 17 for those who are keeping track.

And he also had at least one daughter, Tamar, who features in today's narrative. So a big family.

And God says there's going to be a sword. And indeed, that's what we see in today's text.

[4 : 14] And actually, by the end of chapter 15, we will see David fleeing Jerusalem because of his own son, raising himself up. So, and then just before we get into our text, the immediate context was the death of David and Bathsheba's son.

The son who was conceived through sin. Very upsetting it was to read. And so we pick it up in verse 24. So, verse 24, 2 Samuel chapter 12.

Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba and went into her and lay with her. And she gave birth to a son. And he named him Solomon. Now the Lord loved him and sent word through Nathan the

prophet.

And he named him Jedidiah for the Lord's sake. So David comforted Bathsheba. And again, I just, whenever I think of Bathsheba, my heart breaks, you know, because she's now lost a husband and a son, both because of David.

And I struggle to believe that she didn't know these things. I think she was an astute and intelligent woman. And certainly we see her prominently as a political figure later, which is why I think that.

[5 : 28] But even though these things happened, and even though she knew these things, I believe, she forgives him. And indeed, we spoke of the repentance of David. And Bathsheba has accepted that repentance.

And so we see this tenderness between them. And Solomon is born. The word Solomon, or Hebrew, is shlomo. And it's very closely related to the word shalom.

Shlomo. Shalom. And shalom is a word that most of us will be familiar with. Peace. But actually, that is a bit too reductive. The concept of shalom is a lot broader than the English word peace.

And really, it is more about completeness or wholeness. And the state of things being right or made right. When things are right, when things are right with you, and you are made right or restored, you have shalom.

And David gives him the name. Peace. Things are restored. Things are right. But the Lord loved him, is what we read. The Lord loved him. And through Nathan gives him this name, Yedadiyah.

[6 : 34] Which just means beloved of Yah. Or beloved of Yah. High beloved of the Lord. Now, a couple of things to note on this, just for interest's sake. What's not obvious is that the name Yedadiyah is actually quite closely related to David.

David means beloved. Yedadiyah means beloved of the Lord. It's hard to see from the English transliteration and a lot easier in the Hebrew. You'll just have to take my word for that.

Another interesting point to observe is that the name Yedadiyah never appears again in Scripture. Not once.

At least not in the Old Testament. I don't remember saying it in the New Testament either. So this is more of a divine pronouncement. You are beloved of me.

Rather than an identity. He didn't have a passport with that name on. His passport said Solomon. But also this is noteworthy. To be explicitly noted as loved by God is actually very rare.

[7 : 41] In the Old Testament, that is to say. Abraham is called the friend of God. He's called chosen by God. But he's never explicitly noted as beloved.

Actually, the list is very short. Israel is a nation. And Daniel, who is called a man greatly loved.

That's it. Oh, and Solomon, of course. That's it. I couldn't find anybody else who was so labelled.

Which is not to say that God didn't love anyone else. But what it is to say is how rare and therefore how important it is that we zoom in on this pronouncement. Beloved of the Lord.

Now, as I said, this ended up being something that I achieved over at length and became today's major theme. Now, look at this. This is, if you can look back or look at the screen. 2 Samuel chapter 7.

So this is when God says to David, I'm going to give you a son. And he says, when your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you who will come forth from you and I will establish his kingdom.

[8 : 46] He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me.

When he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men. But my loving kindness shall not depart from him as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

Your house and your kingdom shall endure before me forever. Your throne shall be established forever. So that's a pronouncement. God is going to give David an heir.

And we've talked about this at length. This finds a dual fulfillment in Solomon and ultimately in Jesus Christ, the son of David. But what is said of Solomon is, I'm going to be a father to him.

He will be a son to me. And without barely a pause, when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men. And so we see this link between sonship and being disciplined.

[9 : 54] We see a link between being loved by God, beloved of the Lord, and disciplined. How does God love his sons? He disciplines them. And this is going to contrast very sharply with David, who fails to discipline his sons, and with the false love of Amnon, which is really self-seeking.

And this just blew me away when I saw it. And so I hope I can show some of this to you today. Now, we're going to continue reading now from verse 26.

Now, as we do, we are resuming the narrative of the military campaign against Rabbah. We've talked about this at length before. It actually began in chapter 10, where we read of this war between the people of Ammon and Aram as a collective against Israel.

And Israel soundly defeated Aram and made peace. But Ammon, however, they retreated back to their fortress city of Rabbah. And Israel's commander, Joab, he began this siege, and David remained at home.

And that was when we paused to consider David's actions with Bathsheba. But now we're back and ready to finish this narrative. So, verse 26. Now, Joab fought against Rabbah of the sons of Ammon and captured the royal city.

[11:14] Joab sent messengers to David and said, I have fought against Rabbah. I have even captured the city of waters. Now, therefore, gather the rest of the people together and camp against the city and capture it.

Or I will capture the city myself and it will be named after me. So, the siege is going to break. Joab has captured the city's water supply. They are going to be surrendering very soon.

And he says, David, you better get down here and take the honour of capturing the city before it falls to me. What we're seeing here is Joab very rightly and appropriately refusing to take the glory for this victory.

King David must receive the glory. And as a quick point of application, we are reminded of verses like Luke 17.10, where Jesus taught his disciples, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, we are unworthy slaves.

We have only done, oh, sorry, we have done only that which we ought to have done. There's no place for God's servants or the son of David's servants to take any glory for themselves.

[12:21] And Joab is right on model for us there. We must give all glory back to the Lord. Now, continuing, verse 29. So, David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah, fought against it and captured it.

Then he took the crown of their king from his head and his weight was a talent of gold and in it was a precious stone and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city in great amounts.

He also brought out the people who were in it and set them under saws, sharp iron instruments and iron axes and made them pass through the brick kiln. Thus he did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon.

Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem. So, we see the Ammonites subdued. Now, as a reminder, the Ammonites are actually descended from Lot.

And as such, they are distant relatives to Israel. And for that reason, David isn't putting them to death. He is putting them to labor. And actually, this is a permanent servitude and we don't see the Ammonites being a significant force.

[13:26] Again, if you read far enough, you will find raiding bands and so forth. But they are never a significant military force again. And actually, one thing that is interesting is that one of David's mighty men...

You may know that David had these mighty men, his army, and one of them is actually an Ammonite, Zelech. So, this isn't all-encompassing. This is, in general, those people are captured. But for the individual, there was always opportunity to join God's people. Right, reading on into chapter 13. And so, we have a bit of a subject change here.

And we're introduced to these four characters. Verse 1. Now, it was after this that Absalom, the son of David, had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar.

And Ammon, the son of David, loved her. Ammon was so frustrated because of his sister Tamar that he made himself ill, for she was a virgin. And it seemed hard to Ammon to do anything to her.

[14:27] But Ammon had a friend. His name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother. And Jonadab was a very shrewd man. Now, we should note that the first name mentioned is Absalom.

And so, even as we read this story, and we'll think that the point is Ammon and Tamar, actually, the point is Absalom. He is the main point of this story because the point of the story we're getting into overall is how David's son Absalom rose to power to the point of taking Jerusalem.

And this is the beginning. This story is the beginning of that. So, while we will be focusing on Ammon and Tamar this morning, it is Absalom who is in focus.

Now, we've been introduced to him before in that we saw his birth recorded, 2 Samuel 3. Verse 3, Absalom is the third born of David, born in Hebron. So, before the move to Jerusalem.

Now, his mother's name is Ma'aka, and she was a princess of a place called Geshur. Now, Geshur is up in the north, near the Sea of Galilee, actually, just on the eastern side.

[15:39] Now, Joshua 13, verse 13, notes that this region, this place, Geshur, is technically part of the allotment for Manasseh, East Manasseh.

They never drove them out. They never drove them out, and they remained a distinct people in a distinct kingdom. So, David's marriage to a princess from there was very likely a political one to try and bring about peace and an alliance.

So, that's Absalom. And immediately we say, hmm, divided loyalties then, perhaps. And then he has a sister, Tamar. She is a full sister.

She's also born from Ma'aka. And we have introduced for us Amnon. Now, Amnon is the firstborn of David.

He's the heir. He is the crown prince. He's going to be king. Except he isn't. And then we are introduced to a chap called Jonadab.

[16:41] Jonadab is David's nephew, as we learn here, the son of David's brother. And therefore, he's first cousin then to Amnon and Absalom.

He's described as very shrewd. Actually, the Hebrew word underneath that does not have any negative connotation. It normally would be translated wise or skillful.

He's a competent person. Which just goes to show that skill and wisdom can be used for good and bad. I should also point out that there is a significant irony with these names, or at least Absalom and Amnon.

Absalom means father of peace. And yet he will prove to be exceedingly violent and vengeful.

Amnon means faithful or possibly faithful son.

And we will see him revealed to be unfaithful, very selfish and very damaging to his father. So those names are very ironic. And we read that Amnon loved Tamar.

[17:46] And now, we will see when we get to verse 15 just how shallow his love was. Really, it's an infatuation. It's a crush. It's lust. And actually, what this does is it shows us the breadth of meaning for that word, meaning love.

It means a broad range of things. But he is frustrated. He is crushed or distressed to the point of becoming ill. And it's interesting.

I think the New American said that he makes himself ill or something like that, wasn't it? Yeah, he made himself ill. The tense of the verb is not quite that.

It wasn't deliberate. The way I ended up understanding this is that he had this forbidden desire. And make no mistake, it was a forbidden desire.

I'll show you that in a minute. It was a forbidden lust. And because he chose to nurture this and dwell on it, and maybe he was doodling pictures of Tamar and I'll heart Tamar and all this stuff.

[18:49] He was nurturing this desire that was forbidden, made himself wound up to the point of being sick. So he wasn't deliberately trying to make himself ill, but because of his actions, and because he chose not to put it away, but to focus on it, he ended up in this very difficult situation of his own doing.

Actually, I won't... It is forbidden. If you want to see it for yourself, you would note down Leviticus 18 verse 9, Deuteronomy 27 verse 22 to see it.

In the Torah, God did forbid this closeness of marriage and union. Now, you may know that Abraham and Sarah were half-brother and sister, very much the same.

And the law of Moses came later to introduce the law that would have made that relationship disallowed, unrighteous. I can't prove this, but I believe that you have to remember Abraham and Sarah were several hundred years closer to the pure, original DNA that God gave to Adam and Eve.

And so I believe that the risks that are related to incest just didn't exist. And it was only as time went on and genetic problems accrued, mutations multiplied, that it became a problem.

[20:11] And God said to Moses, this needs to stop. We need to keep these relationships apart. Can't prove it, but... But it's wrong, okay? And you've got those passages there to show you.

So Amnon has this desire. It's a forbidden desire. There is no way for him to get what he wants, so he's pining away. And there's a brief point of application to make, which is that we must submit our desires to God.

Sometimes we desire good things. Sometimes we desire inappropriate and wrong things.

Sometimes we don't know. We must submit our desires to God and ask that the Lord will help us manage our desires, manage our temptations, and trust Him.

So let's read on. We're on verse 4. Jonadab's scheme. He said to him, Oh, son of the king, why are you so depressed? Morning after morning, will you not tell me?

Then Amnon said to him, I am in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom. Jonadab said to him, Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. When your father comes to see you, say to him, Please let my sister Tamar come and give me some food to eat and let her prepare the food in my sight that I may see it and eat from her hand.

[21 : 24] That's the plan. So Jonadab says to him, Why are you so depressed? I think if you're reading a new King James, it says, Why are you growing thinner every day?

Yeah? Yeah. Why are you growing thinner every day? The word is one that normally is used of the poor and the lowly. And so it's a very, very ironic word.

Again, he is the crown prince. And Jonadab says, Dude, why do you look like a pauper? Why do you look so thin, so down, so low?

And I thought, I could ask myself the same question because Galatians 3.26 says that we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

It made me think of that line from A Christmas Carol where he says, I forget the name now, Hannah will tell me, where he says to Scrooge, Why are you so depressed? You're rich enough. What?

[22 : 22] Fred? Yes, that's right. Yeah. Fred says to his uncle, Why are you so miserable? You're rich enough. Anyway, if we have believed in Jesus Christ, then we are adopted and we are heirs of God's kingdom.

And it's good for us to keep our minds fixed on that. To keep our eyes fixed on him because sometimes, I mean, the world is a pretty depressing place a lot of the time. And life throws at us a whole heaping pile sometimes.

But we keep our eyes fixed on him because he has adopted us and he has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, it says in Ephesians. But Amnon, he's not thinking about any of that stuff.

He's not thinking about his sonship or the fact that he's heir. He's thinking about what he cannot have, Tamar. Now, if Jonadab was a true friend, he would have slapped him on the face and said, pull yourself together, this is completely forbidden, don't do it.

You're the crown prince. But Jonadab is not a true friend. If you have friends who are encouraging you in sin, if you have friends who are leading you astray, they are not your friends.

[23 : 32] Jonadab is not a friend to Amnon here. Actually, all that's happening is he is being encouraged towards harm and death. We have to be mindful of whom we consider friends and whom we allow to speak into our lives.

But there's a plan. Feign illness. Jonadab says, feign illness and ask your father for Tamar to come and feed you. And it might seem strange. It seems strange to me, but it was not unusual for women to attend sick.

And actually, later on, we'll read about David in his old age having a carer, a female carer. And so it's, I guess, in a similar sense.

Make cakes in my sight. This, however, I don't think is normal. To eat from her hand? Hmm. Doesn't seem normal. But I also note that the plan only goes so far.

And it was almost like Jonadab was giving himself plausible deniability. That wasn't the plan. That wasn't the plan. But what he is doing is he is giving Amnon a plan to get into a place of compromise where he can then indulge his lust.

[24 : 47] But yes, as I say, Jonadab would be able to plausibly deny and say, oh, no, no, no. I just encouraged him to... Anyway. Verse 6. So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill.

And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, please let my sister Tamar come and make me a couple of cakes in my sight that I may eat from her hand. And then David sent to the house of Tamar saying, go now to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him.

So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house and he was lying down and she took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes. She took the pan and dished them out before him but he refused to eat.

And Amnon said, have everyone go out from me. So everyone went out from him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, bring the food into my bedroom or literally inner room, the private place that I may eat from your hand.

So Tamar took the cakes which she had made and brought them into the bedroom to her brother Amnon. When she brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, come lie with me my sister.

[25 : 55] But she answered him, no my brother, do not violate me for such a thing is not done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing. As for me, where could I get rid of my reproach?

And as for you, you will be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king for he will not withhold me from you. However, he would not listen to her since he was stronger than she.

He violated her and lay with her. Oh, it's hard to read. So David fails here to perceive the scheme. He doesn't see the scheme that is afoot. He doesn't question Amnon. He just says, yeah, sounds good to me. I wonder if he presumed that the presence of the attendants would prevent any problems and perhaps he just simply trusted Amnon and didn't see that there was a risk here. In any case, this is a place where there was not effective safeguards. The attendants were not effective as safeguards. Why?

[27 : 01] Because Amnon had power and Amnon had the power to say, you guys can leave. And that is exactly why when you have people in power and authority, you need additional safeguards from temptation and sin.

You need them. You need proper procedure. You need proper policies to reduce the opportunity for this type of thing. to happen. And this is one of the reasons why it happened.

David did not insist on safeguards. Now we read Tamar's attempt to dissuade Amnon from this evil path. She notes four things here. She says, this is not done in Israel.

This isn't how the people of God operate. We are a distinct people. Secondly, she said, this is a disgraceful thing. It is a nebalah.

I don't know if you remember the guy Nabal, who was Abigail's husband and he was a fool by name and by nature. Nabal or naval is the word for fool.

[28 : 00] And this is a nebalah. This is a foolish thing. It's stupid. Don't do it. It's disgraceful. And it is wicked. For her, thirdly, if you do this thing, I will just become a wretch.

I will have reproach. I will no longer be a marriageable. I will no longer be suitable for marriage. And you'll be a fool.

Again, Nabal, you'll be a nebalah. So Amnon, your idea here will give you a few moments of pleasure. If we have this moment of indulgence, it will lead to ruin.

Now, for her as a victim, it would not lead to punishment. But again, she would no longer be desirable as a wife. And so she suggests that he ask David to make it legitimate.

Now, as previously mentioned, the Torah just does not allow this. The Torah would not allow this marriage. So I think that Tamar is just trying to stop him. I think she is just trying to say, let's see about doing this the proper way.

[29 : 05] knowing full well that dad would say no. Verse 15, while he does his thing, then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her.

And Amnon said to her, get up, go away. But she said to him, no, because this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you have done to me. Yet he would not listen to her.

Then he called his young man who attended him and said, now throw this woman out of my presence and lock the door behind her. Now she had on a long-sleeved garment, but in this manner the virgin daughters of the king dressed themselves in robes.

Then his attendant took her out and locked the door behind her. Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her long-sleeved garment which was on her and she put her hand on her head and she went away crying aloud as she went.

And so thus is the fake and false love of Amnon exposed. He never loved her. It was lust and a desire for that which was unattainable. It was a fantasy-based infatuation for a forbidden

relationship and when he took it by force it turned to hatred because the reality is never what one imagines.

[30 : 33] The reality of sin's fruit is never what it purports that it will be. All he finds there is guilt and shame and foolishness and all the things that Tamar said would be there actually.

Sin promises so much doesn't it sometimes? Sin promises so much. James in chapter 1 verse 14 said that each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Amnon is right there. And then when lust has conceived which we've just read it gives birth to sin and when sin is accomplished it brings forth death.

Do not be deceived my beloved brethren. Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of light with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

So lust conceives and gives birth to sin sin death. That is the path and we will see that fulfilled exactly in Amnon. And in contrast everything that God gives there is it's just good.

[31 : 49] It is good. There's no edge there's no undertone everything that God gives is good. Now Tamar you may have noticed said that in sending her away it is worse than the rape that she's endured.

And I wonder if that's surprising. And the reason that she says this is because she is ruined now. She is destitute and so there would be a responsibility for him to now provide for her.

You can check Exodus chapter 22 verses 16 and 17 for that and also Deuteronomy 22 verses 28 and 29. There is a bride price to be paid.

At minimum there's a bride price to be paid. So in his deed he has caused her great trauma and harm but in sending her away he is condemning her to lifelong hardship and lack.

And so she is thrown out and she bears upon herself these very visible signs of what has happened. The torn robe, the ash on her head. She doesn't keep hidden what has happened.

[33 : 00] And of course the king and everybody knows exactly whom she has been with. So let's read on and see what happens. Verse 20 Then Absalom her brother said to her Has Amnon your brother been with you?

But now keep silence my sister he is your brother do not take this matter to heart. So Tamar remained and was desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

Now when King David heard of all these matters he was very angry but Absalom did not speak to Amnon either good or bad for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

So I don't know what to make of Absalom's words. They don't come across as particularly comforting or understanding. One may say typical male. But he is saying leave it with me.

And notice that he brings her into his house. So he actually does what Amnon would not do which is he provides for her and keeps her.

[34 : 04] What he says to her is don't set your heart on the matter. That's as close as I could get to the literal Hebrew there for what he says. don't set your heart on this matter.

Leave it with me. And David hears about it and he's furious. And then nothing. Nothing.

He does nothing. Silence is deafening. And then Absalom, he also says nothing.

And I wonder what was going on in Amnon's head. Was he thinking, does nobody know? Did I get away with it? Or does nobody care? Well, let's see what happens.

So we're going to read now through to the end of the chapter. I'm not going to be covering this in detail because I just didn't have time. So we'll probably revisit this next time in case anything comes out.

[34 : 59] But verse 23 through verse 39. Now it came about after two full years that Absalom had sheep shears in Baal Hazor which is near Ephraim and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

Absalom came to the king and said behold now your servant has sheep shearers. Please let the king and his servants go with your servant. But the king said to Absalom no my son we should not all go for we will be burdensome to you.

Although he urged him he would not go but blessed him. Then Absalom said if not please let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said to him why should he go with you?

But when Absalom urged him he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. Absalom commanded his servants saying see now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine and when I say to you strike Amnon then put him to death do not fear have not I myself commanded you be courageous and be valiant.

The servants of Absalom did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded then all the king's sons arose and each mounted his mule and fled. Now it was while they were on their way that the report came to David saying Absalom has struck down all the king's sons and not one of them is left. [36 : 20] Then the king arose tore his clothes and lay on the ground and all his servants were standing by with clothes torn. Jonadab that guy Jonadab the son of Shimeah David's brother responded Do not let my lord suppose that they have put to death all the young men the king's sons for Amnon alone is dead because by the intent of Absalom this has been determined since the day that he violated his sister Tamar.

Now therefore do not let my lord the king take the report to heart namely all the king's sons are dead for only Amnon is dead. Now Absalom had fled and the young men who were the watchmen raised his eyes so the young man who was the watchman raised his eyes and looked and behold many people were coming from the road behind him by the side of the mountain. Jonadab said to the king behold the king's sons have come according to your servant's words so it has happened. As soon as he had finished speaking behold the king's sons came and lifted their voices and wept and also the king and all his servants wept very bitterly. Now Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Amihud the king of Geshur and David mourned for his son every day. So Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur and was there three years. The heart of king David longed to go out to Absalom but he was comforted concerning Amnon since he was dead. So we learn that there are two full years that pass in which perhaps Absalom was waiting to see if David would discipline Amnon. [37 : 57] and when nothing happened he took matters into his own hands and murdered Amnon himself. And having done so he flees home to Geshur which as you may remember was his mother's family so granddad.

He flees back to granddad which is outside of David's kingdom. And again we might revisit some details from that next time because this is what I wanted to focus on now. True love false love. God loved Solomon. And as we've read this is intimately linked to correction and discipline. And so we see just how far short of that standard of God's love is the love of these men of whom we've just read.

I thought it would be good for us to read this. 1 Corinthians 13 verses 4 through 8 which is of course that great passage on love. Love is patient. Love is kind. It is not jealous. Love does not brag. It is not arrogant. It does not act unbecomingly. It does not seek its own.

[39 : 06] It is not provoked. It does not take into account a wrong suffered. It does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth. Bears all things. Believes all things. Hopes all things.

Endures all things. Love never fails. And if you think about Amnon of whom it said he loved Tamar, what a phony, what a fraud.

Because true love does not seek its own. And Amnon was 100% seeking his own. True love is kind and Amnon's false love is 100% unkind.

True love does not act unbecomingly and this is exactly what Amnon does to Tamar. A man has got no business saying to a woman I love you if he is not seeking to align himself to this description of love.

So often there is just a confusion between infatuation or lust or desire and love.

[40 : 14] Now David for his part he should have shown the protective love of a father to Tamar. And when sin occurred he should have shown the love that discipline shows. I could turn to a bunch of Proverbs for this one but this one Proverbs 13 verse 24 he who withholds his rod hates his son but he who loves him disciplines him diligently which by no means that godly men must use violence against their children to punish them rather what it is saying is a godly father will deal with sin and help his children understand what is good and what is bad.

There must be discipline otherwise it is not love. And David failed to take any action. He failed to ensure that Tamar was compensated or provided for.

In the Torah there are a number of ways that this could have been restored ranging from Amnon being put to death through to restoration of the bride price and so on.

There are a number of things that could have been done and judged as righteous. None of them are done. None of them are done. So because of this gap we see Absalom stepping in.

He loved his sister and he even provided for her but I think stronger than his love for Tamar was his hatred of Amnon which very quickly becomes wrath and vengeance.

[41 : 44] God says vengeance is mine. So let's talk about the love of God. Sorry for the pop culture reference but I've been watching through Agents of Shield with the family and there was this episode recently where one of the characters were talking about whether they believed in God and they don't but one of them says well I really like the idea that God is love I heard that somewhere and that's the kind of thing I like.

God is love doesn't sound lovely and yes God is love 1 John 4 16 makes that very very clear and explicit but what does it really mean if we say God is love what does it mean?

Does it mean that God is going to tolerate all of our sin? Does it mean that God is just sentimental?

Well no just in case you're wondering and waiting for the answer no it doesn't mean that and as we've already discussed one of the key things is discipline Proverbs 3 verse 11 and 12 My son do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe his reproof for whom the Lord loves he reproves even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights God because he loves his people he disciplines them he disciplines them and Solomon actually writing this says son you better remember this you better remember this and you can trace this theme right the way through revelations 3 19 Jesus speaking says those whom I love I reprove and discipline therefore be zealous and repent repent in the interest of time I'm going to skip a reading from the book of

Hebrews but there was a lengthy exposition on that passage from Proverbs in which he says that being disciplined by God is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be a son and actually if we aren't being disciplined we are illegitimate children and we aren't truly his sons and daughters and I wonder if you can think of a time when you know God was disciplining you and I think sometimes it's hard to discern in the moment and it's only in hindsight where you realise that God was working on me in that season he was training me and it wasn't joyful but the outcome is joy and the outcome is better which is why Psalm 94 verse 12 said blessed or happy is the man whom you chasten oh Lord and whom you teach out of your law so God's loving discipline trains us develops our character makes us better people and it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness but there's another key aspect to this that we must talk about which is love discipline and salvation because one of the key points of God's discipline is salvation

God brings us through difficulty now in the hope that we would avoid hell and then ongoing so that we would enjoy a better resurrection as the writer to the Hebrew says a better resurrection salvation you can read in 1 Corinthians 11 where Paul is talking about the communion table and he says how there are people in your fellowship who are sick and there are people who have fallen asleep and that's because of their contempt of the things of God it's discipline and in that context he writes verse 32 of chapter 11 when we are judged we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world wow what Paul said that not me God disciplines us to avoid condemnation and there are things that God does that are part of God's correction so that we avoid so that we turn from the way of sin and turn to the way of salvation there's a similar thing in 1

[45 : 54] Corinthians 5 verse 5 where Paul speaks of delivering a sinner over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh what why so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus what these are big heavy things but this is what the word of God says and another unexpected example of this would be King Manasseh 2nd Chronicles 33 King Manasseh arguably one of the worst of David's sons in terms of kingdom way down the line that is awful awful awful but he repented when God brought Assyria against him he repented and then he bore fruit in keeping with repentance and he put away the idols and God saved him amazing so God loves us enough to discipline people so that he would turn our course away from the pathway to hell and onto the pathway to heaven but we must remember this as well without God's love there would be no pathway there would be no pathway familiar enough verses from John 3 verse 16 and 17 for God so loved the world this is the love of God once again he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life for God did not send his son into the world to judge the world but that the world might be saved through him without

Jesus without the cross without the love of God expressed in this way there would be no salvation and every sin and every act of disobedience that we've done would stand forever if it were not for the cross we could turn away from sin and we could live a life of pure piety and righteousness but the deeds we've done would remain written in those books and they would be there forever and in the end we would be judged by those deeds if it were not for the cross God loved his creation so

much that Jesus came willingly went to the cross he bore the worst that man can do and at that time the sky darkened and he bore also the wrath and the judgment of God 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 23 and 24 says that while being reviled he did not revile in return while suffering he uttered no threats but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously and he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness for by his wounds you were healed and on that point we have to distinguish that there is a very stark difference between punishment and discipline

Jesus took 100% of the punishment because the punishment for sin is unbearable it is the wrath of God no one can stand it unbearable but what remains is discipline and that is not pleasant but that is what teaches us repentance that is what teaches us to live in righteousness to grow in him to grow in Christ likeness and again by that means we are blessed and rewarded in Hebrews 11 it is that speaks of that better resurrection through endurance so I think I've said enough God loves us so much God's love is so true and so different from the love of man that he provided the only way of salvation which is available to all through Jesus Christ by putting faith in him and then he loves us enough to discipline us righteously and properly so that we might turn walk with him and receive eternal life and even rewards in heaven praise you

Lord for these things praise you Lord that your love is such that you will see us on that right path that you will not allow us to stay in sin you will not allow us to do things which are disobedient to your will Lord God we thank you that you have made the way of salvation that you didn't just leave us languishing but you have made the way of salvation and so that through simple faith by simply repenting and turning and putting our faith and trust in you we know that we have eternal salvation but you continue to work on us in these days oh God Lord I pray that you would forgive us and I ask that you would help us to orient our love to be more like yours every day Lord we need your help we need your help Lord God I pray that you would help us to love in a way that is right that honors you reflects the love of God Lord it's not easy but we look to you and we entrust ourselves to you by your spirit and in the name of Jesus

Christ our Savior we pray these things Amen Amen Amen Thank you.

[51 : 47] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.