

GAME OF THRONES

THE REIGN OF DAVID

Absalom the Rebel

Key idea:

Combining the ingredients of others' sin, our own pride, lust for power, and the desire for a legacy makes for a powerful concoction of the deadly poison of rebellion.

Key text:

2 Samuel 15-18 (2 Samuel 15:1-15)

In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.² He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."³ Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you."⁴ And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he gets justice."⁵ Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him.⁶ Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.⁷ At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the LORD.⁸ While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: 'If the LORD takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron.'"⁹ The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he went to Hebron.¹⁰ Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'"¹¹ Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter.¹² While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom's following kept on increasing.¹³ A messenger came and told David, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."¹⁴ Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword."¹⁵ The king's officials answered him, "Your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses."

Key points:

1. 2 Samuel 15-18 records Absalom's rebellion against David, its eventual failure, and Absalom's death.
2. Through Absalom we can detect several key ingredients that form the deadly connection of rebellion in a human heart.
3. David's sin against Bathsheba and Uriah, and in not disciplining his children, formed a base for rebellion to grow in Absalom's heart.
4. Absalom's pride, lust for power, and desire for a legacy were key ingredients that fomented rebellion in his heart.
5. Unless neutralized, these ingredients lead to rebellious actions which are deadly.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. Why do you think it took eleven years from the rape of Tamar for Absalom to initiate the rebellion against David? When do you think he became aware of the growing rebellion in his heart?
3. Why are the effects of other people's sins so potent in forming rebellion in our heart? How do we neutralize this in our life?
4. What is the relationship between pride and rebellion? Is it possible for rebellion to grow in us apart from pride?
5. Bret said "Sadly, many Christians are willing to justify virtually any sin in themselves or their allies to gain power to do good in the end. This is not the way of Christ and His cross." Why is this not the way of Christ and His cross? If we desire to do good in the end, do the ends justify the means? Why or why not?
6. Why can a desire for legacy lead to rebellion and seizing power? Is a desire for legacy ever valid? If so, how do we know when it has morphed into an invalid desire?
7. Can you think of an area where your words or actions are displaying the tendencies we see in Absalom? Pray and ask God to show you how to neutralize these things in your life.