

Day 45 – Mar. 31

After Absalom's short-lived rebellion against King David, others saw their chance to rule. "Absalom had failed, but with better planning and a larger political base", some thought, "I could be successful!" Enter Sheba, son of Bicri. Seeing an opportunity in the anger of the men of Israel that David had slighted them, specifically in his return to Jerusalem across the Jordan, Sheba raised his own standard and rallied the Israelites to his leadership.

But David knew better now. Having seen how Absalom had risen in power quickly, David sends for the army of Judah to rally to his cause. This would both solidify his power, and bind Judah to him even stronger. But when that takes too long, he sends out his own personal army, and Sheba's rebellion is ended by a wise woman from the town of Abel-beth-maacah. Interesting how many stories find women to be the level headed wise one. Hmm...

In terms of others who might revolt against David, the Gibeonites are a logical choice. So when a famine hits, and God points to the Kingdom's guilt against this people group, David rectifies the situation. It is the first biblical example of the effectiveness of reparations to begin to bring justice to past injustices. The injustices aren't David's, and aren't even his ancestors. The injustices are from King Saul, David's rival, yet David understands that injustices must be made right however they can be whether they are yours or not. This is what it means to follow God and claim a ministry of Shalom as did David, Jesus, and the church today. So David approaches this group who has been so wronged by his people, and asks what he can do. He doesn't come with answers, or take charge of the restitution, but humbly asks what he might do to make amends for his people's sin. And when the answer is difficult, he does it anyway. He spares Mephibosheth son of Jonathan and in so doing holds to the vow he made years before. But besides that, he submits to the will of the Gibeonites, and then later honors the dead, and God smiles, ends the famine, and knows that justice has been done, or at least begun.

How might we follow David's and the bible's example of bringing justice to unjust situations of the past? Our racist history leaps to mind for me. Might the church follow the biblical call to Shalom by approaching situations like this with a hope to restore and repair our injustice, whether caused by us personally or not? Are we humble enough, like King David, to go to those who have been wronged, stolen from, and killed and confess, submit, and listen as they share possible steps forward? And then are we willing to give what they ask not for our sake, but for God's sake? And then can we continue the work of restoring justice and relationship by stopping the same injustice that continues to this day?

Imagine if David had refused to humbly submit to the Gibeonites. Imagine if he had simply excused the past by saying it wasn't him who attacked them, or denying it ever happened at all, and just went on with the injustice unrepaired. Perhaps the famine in the land would have continued, even to this very day, for God will not allow injustice to go unanswered.