

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

MY SON, MY SON

And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

II Samuel 18:32-33

I know of no other place in all of the scripture wherein is recorded for us an example of such great anguish and heartache by a father for his son than in this account of the death of Absalom. King David is the epitome of a grief stricken father bewailing the loss of HIS son. This account is filled with such overwhelming pathos as to make one fully acquainted with the depth of affection and care that a parent has for his child.

This is all the more striking when we look at the attitude and actions of Absalom towards his father. Absalom was a murderer having killed his own half-brother (Amnon) out of revenge for raping Absalom's sister. He did so, not in the heat of anger, but, in a very cold and calculating manner by luring Amnon to a feast simply for the purpose of killing him. So it is obvious that he was a very deceitful man from these actions as well as the fact that he laid a devious plan to undermine his father's (David) approval among the people in order that he might become the king in David's place. So it was in his heart to despise the rule of his father, not to mention his very person. He was a usurper of the highest order putting himself in the king's place and in essence saying "I will not have this man to rule over me". He was very vain and sought to aggrandize and promote himself in the eyes of the people by the cultivation of his appearance, chiefly in his outlandish mode of transportation and by taking great pride in his flowing hair (which by the way was ultimately the very means of his own destruction).

The day came when he intended to take the very kingdom from his father and would have slain him had not David fled from Jerusalem. Then Absalom committed an unspeakable act of treachery and wickedness by laying with his own father's concubines, committing incest in the sight of the nation in order to humiliate his father and secure for himself the kingdom. Absalom had no thought to anyone but his own desire to be king. He did everything in his power to destroy his own father and to build his own reputation at his (David's) expense. Yet in and through it all David still loved him and avoided confrontation with him so as not to be forced to harm him in any way.

Finally David was convinced to arise and restore his kingdom. Yet even then in the midst of all that Absalom had done to provoke him and all that he had done in complete opposition to David's benefit, David counseled the army not to harm Absalom. None but a father could understand why. When others look upon our children they see them as they are, with all of their faults and failures, yet as the scripture says, love covers a multitude of sins. (see I Pet.4:8). A father's love is able to see beyond those faults. David's love for his son demanded that he seek his son's benefit rather than his harm.

But alas, the day came when Absalom reaped exactly what he sowed and he was slain with that which was his glory (his hair) suspending him in a display of his vulnerability which he thought to hide. The news was brought to King David that Absalom was slain, just like all enemies of the king should be. The messenger that was sent to David was very faithful to deliver the message and even as a mere servant could discern the fact that Absalom was an enemy of the King. Yet David had no regard to Absalom having received his just desert, but rather demonstrated his natural affection for his own son and lamented his demise even to the point of wishing that he had died instead of Absalom.

In this poignant display we are reminded of the great love which our HEAVENLY FATHER has for each one of HIS elect children. HE has loved us in spite of our rebellion against HIM. HE has loved us in spite of our attempts to usurp HIS authority and our self serving ways. HE has never sought to harm those whom HE has loved with an everlasting love, having predestined them to be conformed to CHRIST, marking out every step of their path to work together for their good. (see Rom.8:28; I Cor.2:9) HE has been consistent in HIS love to us though we have declared ourselves to be HIS enemies. HE has not viewed us as such even though we have long plotted to take HIS throne. *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."* (Rom 5:8-10)

This brings us to the most amazing paradox in the history of the world. The love of GOD for HIS elect children is that which moved HIM to put HIS own SON to grief and shame in their behalf. "Amazing love, how can it be, that thou my GOD should'st die for me!" David has demonstrated the love of a father to a disobedient and unthankful son. Can we fathom the depths of love between the FATHER and HIS only begotten SON whose very purpose upon this earth was to please HIS FATHER. Can we tell the devotion and desire to do the FATHER's will which the SON manifested. And can we grasp the approval and pleasure which the FATHER had in HIS SON when HE said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* (Mat 17:5) Yet it was this ONE, this perfect SON, this one whose greatest pleasure was to do HIS FATHER's will, of whom the scripture says, *"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. (Isa 53:10)* Is it any wonder that the light of the sun was darkened and the earth trembled and quaked as HE gave up the GHOST. It was this ONE who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows even when we despised the mention of HIS name. It was HE who sweat as it were great drops of blood in our behalf as our sin debt was laid upon HIM and HE agonized in the travail of HIS soul. HE desired to do HIS FATHER's will, to be always pleasing in HIS sight, yet the only way that HE could do that was to become displeasing to HIM, judged by the law a guilty sinner. Is it any wonder that HE cried out *"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."* (Mat 26:39) HE had no fear of HIS approaching death as some have surmised but HIS soul was vexed beyond measure as HE contemplated being cast out of the sight of the only ONE in heaven and earth that HE desired to please. Has there ever been such grief as this? Has anyone ever trod through a darker valley or drank a more bitter cup? And who did HE bear such ignominy for, but the very ones who smote HIM and mocked as HE suffered?

Then pause for a moment and consider that the FATHER who loved and approved HIS son far more than David was capable of loving Absalom, not only did not prevent HIS own SON's grief but designed it and forsook HIS own SON in the hour of HIS greatest need. This is more than mortals can comprehend, beyond the scope of even the angels to look into. Yet for the great love with which HE loved us HE made HIS soul and offering for sin. *"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Rom. 8:38-39)