

“SPEAK A WORD TO BRING BACK THE KING”

Sunday Morning, February 18, 1962

The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City

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I ask you to turn again, if you will, to II Samuel, Chapter 19. We are desirous this morning of exploring this word that we have heard in the 10th verse, Now speak a word, bringing the king back. – “Why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back.” But before we can come to the personal and practical application of this text, it is necessary for us to acquaint ourselves with the problem that is represented by the text. As you understand, there were several crises in David’s life. First, there was that occasion when Samuel, calling for the sons of Jesse, poured the horn of oil upon the young lad’s head, indicating that the throne of Israel should one day be his, a shepherd boy with the flock, without any prospects, without any esteem on the part of his brethren to become the one that should succeed the noble, mighty, handsome Saul. Unthinkable, and yet this was the indication of God’s will and purpose. And you recall how, on occasion, it was necessary for him to wrestle with the bear and the lion in order that he might protect his father’s flock. This was a challenge to him, and demanded valor and courage. Again you see him when he takes the sling and, in the Name of the Lord, goes against the giant and thus is indicating that God has given to him a heart equal for the task. You see him as he is driven into exile by a vengeful Saul, knowing that the kingdom is wrested from him, nonetheless determined to hinder the outworking of God’s plan, David is unwilling to raise his spear against the one who at one time was God’s choice of king, and even now is on the throne. So these are crises in his life. He met most of them in faith, most of them in obedience; most of them were encountered in keeping with that which characterized him, a man after God’s own heart. But there came that one occasion when he was tempted and fell, and carried the whole nation of Israel as well as his

family into grief with him in the fall. Just one crisis that was not met in valor and in obedience was enough to bring grief and heartache to David, and the sword into his family, and the wresting of God's blessing from the nation of Israel.

Now what was the reason for his failure? To what can you attribute the Cause of this failure? After a lifetime of obedience and faith, we find first of all David's nature. God did not choose David because he was in and of himself noble. He chose him because of what grace could do. Oh, there were certain human characteristics which would cause him to stand out and to be known, but David had a heart that was expressed by the words that he used in the penitential Psalm, "In sin did my mother conceive me." And he had known iniquity from his birth. Here was a man who saw himself and understood himself after this great fall. Perhaps he himself had become somewhat complacent, satisfied, convinced that he was of different stuff than other mortals, but there was this occasion when that which David was by nature was manifest and revealed and declared, and he had forgotten that he was not walking toward the possibility of shame, but he was walking along the crumbling precipice of shame with every step that he took. This was the expression made by the godly Parker¹ as he walked one day with Spurgeon on the moor in England as they were vacationing near each other. They were speaking of one of their contemporaries, one of their brethren that had fallen into sin, and he said, "Methinks," said Spurgeon, "the reason for it lies in the fact that he thought that there was a precipice out there toward which he could turn, and forgot that he was walking along the crumbling edge with each step that he took." And thus David perhaps forgot who he was and what he was, and that it was all of grace and none of him.

¹ Joseph Parker (1830-1902) An English Congregational Minister

He became absorbed in worldly pursuits. He was more interested in that which pleased him than that which pleased God. At the time of his sin, he had lost some absorption with the Lord. It was not a time of plenitude of Psalms. He was not writing. He was there, engaged in that which pleased him. He had come to the place where he could lightly regard his enemies. He sent his soldiers out to fight, but the captain was not with them. He was not there beside them. His army was out at the battle front. He had somehow lost sight of the fact that these enemies hated him and were opposed to everything he stood for, and were God's enemies, and that he must stand valiantly against them. Then, of course, David had another reason why he fell, and that was his over familiarity with truth. He had read so much. He had heard so much. He could repeat so much. Oh, he knew the answer to it. He knew the doctrine. He knew the testimony. He it was that had said, Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word. But he had become too familiar with it. It did not have the meaning it once had. He just knew it so well he did not need to study it and meditate upon it, and eat of it and live with it. And so his over familiarity with truth.

And then, of course, there was this attractiveness of the pretender to the throne. For there is a throne that only Jehovah can fill. There is a Throne in every heart that only the Lord Jesus is big enough to occupy. And now David is seeing himself on that throne, choosing regardless of the will of God to the rights of others to please himself, and the attractiveness of one who would contend for the throne of his heart is such that he can feel with impunity he can sin. May I say this of you, of me, anyone that ever sins does it for the same reason. Moved by his depraved nature, absorbed for the time at least in worldly pursuits, with a disregard of a mortal enemy that is determined to destroy all the trust in God, with overfamiliarity of truth that seems to make it justifiable for us to disregard the Word of God in these particulars, and then the attractiveness of

the situation that seems to make it so rational. Every one that ever sins does it rationally, believes that it is the wise, right, good thing to do under these circumstances, at that time. This is how mortals act. We justify. The word that is used by the psychologist is rationalize. We make it reasonable and right to do that which we may have known to be absolutely contrary to the will of God, and David is saying something like that, In these circumstances, in my condition, with this situation, it is all right. But it is all wrong, and he nevertheless proceeds to do it.

And, of course, he has to justify it. He has one thing leads to another; adultery gives way to murder, and then to lying. But he has forgotten that God has seen. He has forgotten that God knows, and that, even though he is a man after God's own heart, God cannot, God cannot make peace with sin with even David's life. Someone said he knew the Bible was inspired, for if men had written it with the nobility of David on every other page of the book, they never would have sullied his reputation by putting in this one area of his crime. They would have left it, but God, being God who cannot lie, has given to us the record of David's fall into sin, as well as his noble obedience and faith.

And then in time, the Lord's time, Nathan the prophet comes. Nathan comes, anointed by the Spirit of God. And two of the gifts of the Spirit are seen in operation. The first is the gift of the word of knowledge wherein he knows because what the Holy Ghost has told him has transpired in David's life, and he tells David what he has done, indicating that God sees, God knows, God understands. Similarly in the New Testament we see Peter dealing with the sin of Ananias, and now Nathan is dealing with the sin of David, disclosing to him the fact that God knew. And then not only is there the exercise of this word of knowledge, knowing what he could not have otherwise know, but there is also the exercise of prophecy. And so we find that in the

12th chapter, in verses 10 to 14 the prophet Nathan makes declaration concerning that which is to take place in David's life because of his sin.

“Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.”

Now do you see the difference between David and Saul. When Samuel came to Saul and said, This evil you have done before the Lord; you have disobeyed Him, and God would choose obedience rather than sacrifice. You recall what Saul said, Tell it not to the people. Do not let the people find out. But not so David. We find that here is a man who is a man after God's own heart. I have sinned. Oh, he had sinned against his family. He had sinned against Israel. He had sinned against Bathsheba. He had sinned against Uriah. He had sinned against his soldiers. He had sinned. But he says, I have sinned against the Lord. He saw that sin is first against God. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord hath put away thy sin. Thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. And so there is this, that there can be forgiveness concomitant with the natural consequences of sin.

Someone has said, The nail can be pulled out, but the hole remains. And though God pardoned and forgave David, yet we see that that which is implied in this whole testimony was because of David's sin. We find that there is this young man, Absalom, one of David's sons. My what personal advantages he had. He was beautiful, handsome the most beguiling personality we

are led to believe from what is stated. Then we discover that he brilliant, intellectually brilliant, clever, to the point of knowing exactly how to achieve the ends he desires, Innovating, not following the usual pattern. But then we find out that he is unscrupulous and treasonous. For he uses all of his beauty, and all of his intellect to accomplish his own vain ambitions. And so Absalom has personal advantages. What a picture he is of Satan, for we find that Lucifer had all of this. The most beautiful of God's created beings, the most brilliantly intellectual of all God's created beings, but there was that in his heart. We find also that Absalom had certain strategic advantages. He was the king's son. He, therefore, being close to the king after he had been brought back from those two years when he was in Jerusalem and did not see the king's face, he knew the noble purposes of the king of his people. He knew that David was too noble to stoop to chicanery and duplicity. He had heard of his father's dealing with Saul, and he knew that this man would fight fairly. He would not stoop to the things which were grist in the mill of Absalom. But Absalom like Satan had taken darkness and a lie, and deceit and hatred, to accomplish his purpose. Then he knew the weakness of the soldiers. He knew how to flatter them, to offer them promotion. He was psychologist. He knew the vanity of the people when they would come into the village and David was not there in the gate, he would say, "Isn't it a pity that there is no one here to care." Oh, he was determined to secure his ends and aims, and exalt himself above the throne of the rightful king. It all just smells in every nook and cranny of that very same one who before said, I will be like the Most High. I will set my throne above the Throne of the Most High. We find that Absalom's plan was successful, no question about it. He was able to do it, just as Satan revolted and carried with him a third part of the angels in Heaven, so Absalom was able to carry sufficient number of the people of Israel that he could accomplish his end and secure his aim.

Now what was David's reaction to this? How did David meet the fact that Absalom said in Hebron there is a king raised over you in the person of Absalom? What did David do? Did he say, I am going to defend myself and fight for my rights. Ah you must remember, David had been met by Nathan, and so David knew that the sword was to come and in his own family. And so we find it stated that David arose to flee. He said, Come let us go, lest he smite the city. It was not that David could not defend himself, but he knew that if he did, the innocent in the city would be destroyed in the warfare. And so we find him saying, Arise, flee. And when the priests came with the Ark, David turned and said, Take it back. God is doing this to me (in his heart though he did not verbalize it) Because of my sin, I can make no appeal to the Lord. Carry the ark back. And then you find him going barefoot, weeping up the Mt. of Olives. And if you want to know what he is saying as he goes up the side of the mountain that was later to see our Lord on its hill side as well, all you need to do is turn to this. Here is the king, barefoot, and with weeping, sobbing, clad in sackcloth, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness, according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin. I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me, as he goes up the side of Mount of Olives."

And then we find that when Shimei comes out and would curse him; and they would state, And you, a king, allow this dog to curse you, he says, Touch him not. God has bidden him to curse me. And then when he learned that Absalom had died, you find that this man is plunged into inconsolable grief. Why? Because he knows that it is his sin that has ruined Absalom's life. Absalom wanted to do what he did. His heart was lifted up with vanity and ambition. But David still knew that it was his sin that had plunged his family into ruin. But notice also what happens when Joab comes, reproves him, and says, You hate those who are your friends, and you love

this one that sought to destroy you and your wives and your children. Now we found in this already that the best of men are by no means perfect, but we also see the worst of men are by no means incapable of wisdom. And so, Joab who certainly was justifiably demoted for having disobeyed the king's word in slaying Absalom, nevertheless this vain ambitious man, for such he was though loyal in some particulars, is capable of bringing David face to face with his responsibility.

Now what happened? As he commands, orders, David to recognize his responsibility, then we find that David dries his eyes and dresses, and goes out and takes the place that he is to have. Now we come to that which is applicable to us.

We find that we can apply to us, in a sense, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, to Israel. Our Lord was given to be the head over all things to the church, and yet it has been the enticing allurements of another Absalom, the god of this world, the prince of darkness, that has caused the king to have to flee. And I believe there are many churches and many Christian hearts where the rightful King Jesus, this One who by His nature ought to reign, the One who by His anointing ought to reign, this One who by His victory over death and hell and Satan, ought to reign, is nevertheless refused the place of reigning because His people have allowed their hearts to be drawn aside by some enticing Absalom. And wherever a child of God permits sin and allows sin in his life, he will have a case of Israel following Absalom, and the King having to flee. And what a tragic thing it is that in the time of Eli, when the glory of God had departed from the Temple, that they whist not. At least in Israel they knew that the king had fled, they knew that he was gone. They had seen him go. I wonder if you recognize that it is a possibility that if you like Absalom have listened to nature and the world, and the enticements, the attractiveness of the pretender have perhaps grieved the Lord so that the King is no longer reigning as once He did

and fulfilling His purpose and bringing blessing as once He did. Well we find here that after the destruction and the defeat of Absalom the insurrectionists were convinced. They discovered how wrong they had been. Every time there has ever been revival in the church it is because someone has discovered how wrong they were in listening to the voice of the alluring, enticing, beguiling prince of darkness who has led them into something that grieves Him.

And so, as I look into your eyes today and speak directly to you personally, let me ask: Has the King had to go from the heart that once He held in His sway and Throne and Kingdom. Has He had to do that? Then, will you with Israel discover that all the Absalom that have ever pretended to the throne were imposters and usurpers. There is only One that deserves to reign there. You cannot, and Satan cannot. But if you do, he will. If you are prepared to realize that it is wrong, and call Him back and speak a word to bring back the King. And how often in the life of a church, it is but the word that is spoken that will bring back the King. They saw the rights of the King, and their duties toward him, and so they resubmitted to him. There they were, the tribes that had gone after Absalom, and now Absalom is dead, and God has said that David is the rightful king, and so everyone is accusing the other until finally, in brokenness, they come, and stand before David and say, We want you to rule over us.

But there was still Judah. There were still these that he called bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. And David said to them, What are you going to do? What are you going to do? How often it is that in any group, whether it is in the home that so frequently the children will break before the mother, and the mother before the father. How often in any church it is that those who ought to break first are the last. Here was Judah, his own tribe, they ought to have come at the very forefront. But there went that loving word from David to Judah. Now speak a word to bring back the king. Just speak a word to bring back the king. How often it is just a word.

I remember reading about John Bunyan sitting outside the door of a public house in England and he was cursing so violently and bitterly that the barmaid opened the door, threw back the shutters, and said, “John Bunyan, if you don’t stop your swearing, God will smite you and us for listening.” Just a word, but that word was enough to bring back the king, to bring John Bunyan to an awareness of his guilt that he sought God and rested not until he knew the forgiveness of sins.

You remember it was in Wales when that little girl arose in the midst of a testimony, and she cried out. They heard words that she could not testify as she had planned to. And, oh, she said, “I cannot say anything but this, Bend me, Lord, bend me.” And with that she fell. And Seth Joshua, the father of Peter Joshua, whom some of you have known, standing there before them, caught the word that would bring back the King to Wales, Bend me, O God. And that tall, stalwart, strong man bent as though bowed by a heavy weight, and as he came over the pulpit his cry was, Bend me, bend me, bend me, O God. And this became the word that brought back the King.

Now what is the word that will bring it back in your life? David’s word was, God be merciful to me, a sinner. Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep me from presumptuous sins. Lead me in a plain path because of my enemies. What is the word that will bring the King back to your heart. You see, if you alone bring Him back into the place of reigning in your life, then revival and blessing has come to you. But if everyone does but you, then revival has missed you, so won’t you speak today a word, just a word to bring back the King. Whatever it is, a word of brokenness, a word of confession, a word requesting forgiveness and pardon, speak a word to bring back the King to your heart, to the throne that has been violated because of the fact that

you have listened, perhaps, to some Absalom that has sought to take that which belongs to King Jesus. Just speak a word to bring back the King.

This word, spoken to sinners, bring them to the foot of the cross; spoken to saints to keep them from the way of darkness. Won't you speak a word to bring back the king. Shall we pray.

Our Father, we believe that Thou art speaking to us personally. We know that Thou hast made all of us to not only know pardon and forgiveness, but Thou hast made us sit with Christ, reign with Him. Thou hast made us kings and priests unto Him, washed us in His Blood and made us to be kings and priests unto Thyself. And now, Father, we would come to Thee, praying that in every heart there might be that searching that the Holy Spirit will be to us as a Nathan, applying the Word, showing us wherein we may have grieved Him and allowed Absalom to gain power and control and influence. Perhaps it is by our reading, by our listening, by what we have said, by our ambitions, whatever it is, Father, speak to us today that we may speak that word to bring back the King.

As we close this moment of meditation, with heads bowed and eyes closed, what would be the word you would have to speak? Would it be a word of apology, a word of request for forgiveness, Would it be a word of confession, a word of forsaking? What is the word, just the one word? Is it the word, I cannot, I failed, forgive me? What is the word? It is not a big word. It is not a big word. Israel was wrong. They had followed Absalom. Judah was wrong. They had followed Absalom. But they were willing to speak a word to bring back the King. Are you willing to speak a word, a word, just a word to have revival? Just a word to have broken fellowship renewed? Just a word to have the blessing of God? All it takes, you know, is to speak a word that will bring back the king. I am sorry. Forgive me. Such a little word, but it can

open the flood gates of blessing. Are you prepared to speak a word that will bring back the King?

Do it. Let us stand for the

Benediction and prayer. Not only do it today, if there is something of long standing, but at any moment speak the word that keeps the King on the Throne, reigning and ruling. Father of our Lord Jesus, see us now, a people that have been this while in Thy presence. We are asking that King Jesus may come back to the rightful place in our hearts, and in our homes, and in His church. O Father, how we long to see Him exalted here, exalted so that He is seen and no man save Jesus only. And so we would ask, our God, that Thou wilt deal with us as we part, that we may each of us find just the word that we need to speak that will bring back the King to His rightful place, to reign, to rule, to bless. We believe Thou art waiting to pour out blessing, more than we can contain. And so, our Father, as we part go Thou with us. Now may Thy grace, mercy and peace, the continual working of Thy Spirit upon us, until we have spoken a word that will bring back the King. Be our parting portion. Amen.