

Hiding from God
2 Samuel 15:24-29
Arm yourself for spiritual combat today.

How are you doing in the spiritual battle?

You are fleeing from Jerusalem. After Absalom declares himself king in Hebron, David has to flee from Jerusalem or be killed. This week, David's sufferings teach us that spiritual fatherhood requires faith, courage, humility, and trust.

Pray that the Lord draws you out of sloth to embrace the kingly mission he has given you. Pray for the grace of freedom and humility for all Exodus Men, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel

And Abiathar came up, and behold, Zadok came also, with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God, until the people had all passed out of the city. Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his habitation; but if he says, 'I have no pleasure in you,' behold, here I am, let him do to me what seems good to him." The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Look, go back to the city in peace, you and Abiathar, with your two sons, Ahima-az your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness, until word comes from you to inform me." So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem; and they remained there.

Reflection

The ark of the covenant was a sacred and powerful symbol of God's presence among his people. It was similar to the tabernacle of today that contains the Eucharist, for, in addition to the tablets of the Law and Aaron's staff, it contained a golden jar of manna (Hebrews 9:4). The ark went before the Israelites in their sojourn in the desert and it made the waters of the Jordan turn back so that the Israelites could cross the river on dry ground. The ark was carried around the city of Jericho before its walls collapsed. When the Philistines captured the ark, they put it in the temple of their god, Dagon, until they soon found Dagon's statue lying prostrate before the ark with its head and arms cut off. After something like bubonic plague broke out among them, the Philistines returned the ark to Israel with reparations only seven months after its capture.

David, who had once danced before the ark as he brought it to Jerusalem, now for some reason abandons it. As he flees the city for his life, he commands the priests to take the ark back and to remain in the city. Absalom may have been tempted to kill the priests and desecrate the ark in some way. Regardless, David seems to leave the Lord behind. Perhaps he is in some way abandoning the covenant, or at least abandoning his trust in the Lord. He forgets that he is loved and believes that the Lord might say, "I have no pleasure in you." So, like Adam after the first sin, David hides from God. Sloth is, after all, flight from God as friend.

Spiritual fatherhood is impossible without trust. All fatherhood has its origin in God. Machismo and self-reliance do not make a good father. Fatherhood requires reliance on God. When the Bible speaks of the dangers of "riches," it is not referring exclusively to material wealth. Riches may be understood as anything that tells us, "I don't need God." The "poor in spirit," on the other hand, are those who know that all is from God and all is for God. A good father never surrenders his trust in God, and never abandons prayer. A father's trust in God gives hope to his children when they fear that all is lost.

Many men have learned that they have to do things themselves if they want them done right. Many men, having abusive, weak, or absent fathers, have concluded that no help is coming. Self-reliance becomes their help and their hope. Sometimes it takes something drastic to make them realize that they are really powerless without God.

How does self-reliance show up in your life? What has taught you to trust in God, rather than hide from him? How have you abandoned your covenants with God and others? Take these questions into prayer.

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 8 Action Items

Plan another communal BBQ.

Keep Friday as a day of penance.

Check in with and pray for your anchor.