

## Sloth and Contempt

2 Samuel 3:6–11

Where is the Lord working in your life today?

Be on alert for spiritual sloth and pride.

You are in David's palace in Hebron. Surrounded by violence and foolishness, David remains steadfast, prioritizing God's glory above his own. We must resist being sucked into the vortex of confusion and continue to seek the Lord in prayer and work within his timing.

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

While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul. Now Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?" Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, "Am I a dog's head of Judah? This day I keep showing loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not given you into the hand of David; and yet you charge me today with a fault concerning a woman. God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the Lord has sworn to him, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beer-sheba." And Ish-bosheth could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

### Reflection

In today's reading, we see that Abner once more rejects proper order. Disregarding the dignity of Rizpah, he usurps Ish-boseth by trying to gain an heir from the former king's wife. When confronted about it by Ish-bosheth, Abner has very little sense of respect and reverence for the king. He is one of those people who thinks he need not respect his superior because his superior is incompetent or impotent. Because Abner has lost all sense of honor and sacred order, he only values himself and brute power.

Sloth, like all sin, manifests itself in disorder, in disorganized lives, in wrong priorities, and in a sea of moral ambiguity or equivalency. We can see this clearly in Abner's rather callous attitude. He disregards his ruler, the son of Saul, and disregards Rizpah. In his words to Ish-bosheth, we can sense his self-justifying indignation. The normal rules do not apply

to him because he is the mighty Abner. Without him, Ish-bosheth would not be king. If anything, he thinks, Ish-bosheth should be doing more to help him. He essentially says to Ish-bosheth, "You are a sham of a king, only in power because of me, so I do not have to respect you."

Those who write on sloth observe that it manifests in a disdain for authority. The monk disregards his abbot or the rule of his order because, unable to follow it himself, he latches on to the failings of his abbot and fellow monks to excuse his own failings. He holds on to their sins while minimizing his own.

We see this same slothful attitude quite a bit today in politics. There is widespread suspicion of leaders and institutions. We dismiss the points of the other side with accusations and slander. So many people today think they do not have to be good citizens and respect their leaders because they think everyone is corrupt. There is a widespread notion in our culture that we do not need to respect our authorities because they are not worthy.

However justified this concern is, it is still sloth to disregard authority. While the modern world only offers its respect and obedience when it suits, the Christian impulse is different. We know that authorities are given to us by God, even if those wielding that authority are unworthy. We are called to respect and obey where we can. We know we can call respectable and moral behavior out of a corrupt person when we treat them with respect in return.

In our culture of increasing cynicism toward authority, we need to recover obedience and respect where it is justly due. What authority in your life can you work to respect? Is it your parents or spouse? Is it the civil authority, your employer, or clergy? Talk with the Lord about your level of respect for authority today.

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

#### Week 2 Action Items

Form a spiritual plan for vacation time.

Meditate on how sloth impacts your spiritual life.

Schedule fraternity time.