

Be Resolved

2 Samuel 2:8-11

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. David is surrounded by violence and foolishness. He remained steadfast because he was single-minded in prioritizing God's glory above his own. We, too, are overwhelmed with distractions and duties. 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

Now Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and all Israel. Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Reflection

While David consulted the Lord and went to Hebron to be anointed as king (only after prayerful discernment), his rival, Ish-bosheth, is "taken" by Abner and "made" king. The narrative makes it plain that it is, in fact, Saul's commander, Abner, who is really in charge. And Abner appears preoccupied with power, not honor.

David and Abner have a history. Abner was present when the young David killed Goliath. And in 1 Samuel 26, when David infiltrated Saul's camp only to spare him, David called into question Abner's manhood and told him that he and his men deserved to die for failing to protect the Lord's anointed. Perhaps this left him feeling rather Cain-like toward David. Bishop Barron, commenting on 2 Samuel, remarks: "Abner and [Ish-bosheth], setting themselves against David and fomenting a civil war, operate in the tradition of Cain, the builders of the tower of Babel, Esau, and the worshipers of the golden calf." [2] And so, at the very outset of David's kingdom, with David as king of Judah and Ish-bosheth as "king" of Northern

Israel, we see a flash of what will happen at the end of the Davidic kingdom when, after the reign of David's son, King Solomon, the kingdom divides into northern and southern kingdoms, Israel and Judah respectively.

From this moment forward, David will have to navigate internal and external conflicts to his kingdom. So it is with us. That we are in God's will does not mean all will be smooth sailing—a life without tensions, trials, and conflicts, both external and internal to our souls. As Abner set himself against David, so the devil sets himself against our souls. We cannot allow the threats, uncertainties, attacks, and trials to discourage us.

This is one way sloth or lethargy enters our souls. We start to feel a sense of insecurity, uncertainty, or entitlement. Maybe we are not really who we think we are? Maybe this religious life is not really for me? Maybe following the Lord is not worth it? Maybe if I am doing God's will then God owes me favors and will make things easy for me? With these thoughts, the seeds of sloth are sown. All it takes for us to become lazy in the spiritual life or in our vocation is to let them settle into the soil of our hearts. For when they do, discontentment, anger, resentment, jealousy, and, in short, a flood of other wicked thoughts grow and all have a neglect of God's honor at their core.

Have you allowed even one challenge or threat of life to sow undue discouragement in your thinking? Consider this thoroughly. Then, ask the Lord to open your heart and mind to receive the virtues of prudence and fortitude in a greater way today, that your mind would be renewed.

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 2 Action Items

1. Form a spiritual plan for vacation time.

Last week we looked at true leisure and how summer provides us an opportunity to focus on what is most important: God and family. Vacation gives us an opportunity for leisure, but it is also a ripe time for spiritual sloth. When you have vacation time, how will you preserve your disciplines of prayer, asceticism, and fraternity?

Prayer always has priority, as God always deserves primacy. If we stay close to him, everything will go well, including our vacations, which will be much more blessed. Stay in touch with your fraternity, even as people have different travel schedules, and help one another to stay on track. Don't give the devil any opportunity to attack while you experience your needed time for refreshment.

You need a plan to ensure your vacation time goes well from a spiritual perspective. How will you stay on track and keep your focus on what matters most?

2. Meditate on how sloth impacts your spiritual life.

Kings of Summer provides you an opportunity to reflect upon an often overlooked deadly sin. Sloth or acedia tries to stay hidden beneath business and distraction. Take time during prayer to meditate on where this noonday demon may be lurking in your life. Ask the Lord to reveal what is hidden from you.

3. Schedule fraternity time.

Fraternity time will be harder to schedule during the summer but do not give up on it. Meet as often as you are able and look at other ways to stay in touch over the summer. If you can meet this week, discuss the overarching themes and action items and how you will implement them this summer.