

Disintegration

2 Samuel 10:6–14

Arise to follow the Lord today.

Has the summer been a time of spiritual progress or malaise?

You are in Jerusalem, David's new capital city. God prefers that, rather than building the Lord's house, David set himself to building up his own home by becoming a good father and husband. Rejecting the Lord's calling, David lays the groundwork for trouble.

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

When the Ammonites saw that they had become odious to David, the Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and the men of Tob, twelve thousand men. And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men. And the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the gate; and the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah, were by themselves in the open country. When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear, he chose some of the picked men of Israel, and arrayed them against the Syrians; the rest of his men he put in the charge of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. And he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what seems good to him." So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians; and they fled before him. And when the Ammonites saw that the Syrians fled, they likewise fled before Abishai, and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the Ammonites, and came to Jerusalem.

Reflection

When David sees the resistance against him, he sends Joab. Increasingly it will be Joab's military prowess, rather than David's diligence, that will be highlighted. While it is true that David eventually goes out to meet the threat, Bishop Robert Barron remarks that David "is becoming less the martial leader and more the sedentary king." This narrative reveals his "growing unwillingness to engage evil directly and personally" (2 Samuel,

p. 91).

Sloth is a corrosive vice. It completely eviscerates the human person. As Dom Jean-Charles Nault points out, sloth leads to the “disintegration of the human person” (Noonday Devil, p. 10). Sloth either thins out the human soul by having it endlessly and exhaustingly pursue pleasures or swamps it with an overwhelming sense of meaninglessness. The human person becomes frayed, brittle, or diluted. Over time, if sloth is not checked, strengths diminish and the person recedes more and more—retreating inward and failing to engage. We see this with David as more and more of what made him such a noble and honorable person is eroded.

Do you find yourself tempted to withdraw or disengage? Do you let others take on responsibilities that should be yours? Do you find that things that were once your strengths are beginning to become too daunting for you to undertake?

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 5 Action Items

Bookend your day with a morning offering and nightly examen.

Check in with your anchor.

Don't give in to distractions.

Invite men to join your fraternity for Kings of Summer, Part 2.