

Commitments

2 Samuel 2:12-17

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

Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men arise and play before us." And Joab said, "Let them arise." Then they arose and passed over by number, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And each caught his opponent by the head, and thrust his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is at Gibeon. And the battle was very fierce that day; and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

Reflection

Gibeon was a neutral territory but closer to David in Judah. Thus, David's general, Joab, perceives this as an act of aggression and goes out to meet Abner. The expression "let the young men arise and play before us" should be understood in its context. In a military context, "young men" refers to trained fighters, and the verb for "play" is used here to convey "hold a contest." There is a steady, deliberateness that is discernible in Joab. He simply replies, "Let them arise," to Abner's provocation, evincing a calm, yet confident courage. He did not initiate the meeting, nor did he suggest the contest, but he was prepared and ready to do what was right and necessary when the time came.

We can imagine a less prepared Joab. We can imagine a Joab still basking in the fact that he is now serving a king. He could be thinking about his new

palace or strategies for expanding David's kingdom or a whole range of goals and dreams. A distracted Joab likely would not have noticed the advance of Abner. He may have been more anxious about a conflict. He likely would not be as decisive and collected.

Taking on too much often opens the door to spiritual sloth. When we are juggling too many things, we lose our focus on what is important. We cannot be deliberate. If we are to resist or prevent spiritual sloth, we need to resist being overcommitted. This is particularly difficult in our time.

Spend time in prayer today examining your life and considering whether you have too many commitments. In what or when do you feel exhausted or taxed—even if you have adequate rest? When do you catch yourself thinking or saying, "I'm tired?" Are there certain tasks that you take on compulsively that end up making you irritable? If you are feeling exhausted or are struggling with being overwhelmed, ask the Lord to help you pay attention to your life and identify the source of your unrest. Do this because overcommitment is the doorway to lethargy.

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.