

The Father of Lies

2 Samuel 15:7-12

Embrace the Father's love this day.

How can you show this love to those in your care?

You are in David's chaotic household. King David's sins, in particular his neglect of his children, had disastrous personal and national results. This reminds us to cherish the gift of spiritual fatherhood.

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 at the end of four years Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the Lord, in Hebron. For your servant vowed a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the Lord will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the Lord.'" The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose, and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, 'Absalom is king at Hebron!'" With Absalom went two hundred men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their simplicity, and knew nothing. And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh. And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing.

Reflection

When Moses went before the evil Pharaoh seeking freedom for God's people, he said, "Let us go a three days' journey in the wilderness, that we may offer sacrifice to the LORD, our God" (Exodus 5:3). Absalom here makes an eerily similar request, "Let me go and pay my vow." But, he asks this of a good king, not for the sake of freeing God's people, but for the sake of seizing the throne. This is a typical example of how evil parodies the good. Satan mimics the good in order to deceive us and lead us astray. Whenever we fall for a temptation, we do not desire pure evil. Rather, we desire what is evil because it currently appears to be good in some respect. Sometimes the devil mimics the good simply to mock it. When St. Paul speaks of false prophets, he says, "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

The devil likewise parodies fatherhood. Just as the crafty Jonadab steps in

for David to give Amnon “fatherly” advice about how to get away with raping Tamar, the serpent steps in for God in the Garden of Eden. With “fatherly” benevolence, he explains to Eve: “You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4–5). Satan loves to portray God as an oppressive tyrant who wants to control us and limit our freedom. He loves to suggest sin as true liberation. Satan wants to be our father, advising us to let loose and live life without limits. Jesus points out Satan’s mock fatherhood when addressing the Jews who refused to believe in him: “You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

Absalom is more like Satan than Moses. God fathered Satan to be good and beautiful, but Satan became enamored with his own beauty and rebelled. Just so, “There was no one so much to be praised for his beauty as Absalom” (2 Samuel 14:25).

On the spiritual pilgrimage of life, it is important to acknowledge that the Kingdom of God has enemies. Evil is not just the moral quality opposite of good, a mere impersonal force in the world, like bad luck. Satan is a living person, a spiritual being, a fallen angel who seeks to destroy you and bring you to Hell. How does the devil love to trick you under the appearance of good? How are you tempted to be king of your own soul? Dialogue with our Lord about these questions today. Then, when you are finished, pray the Our Father, focusing especially on the line, “Deliver us from evil.”

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 7 Action Items

Meditate on your vocation.

Schedule fraternity time.

Reflect on your summer schedule.