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**ABSALOM REBELLED AGAINST DAVID**

2Samuel 15:1-12

Key Verse: 15:1 “In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.”

I want to ask you to pray for Venezuela. The protests of these days left 17 people died and 261 people hurt. And we have to pray for Ukraine. We live in the world where are many conflicts and problems. Also we have small and big conflicts with others. Why? Studying the medieval history, I found an interesting story of Henry IV, an emperor of Holy Roman in the 11th century. He is well known for begging the pope in Canossa. The interesting history is that his first son rebelled and Henry IV fought against him. Later he gave the throne to his second son, but his second son also rose in rebellion against him and Henry IV fought against his second son. It is a terrible history, no? But in the Bible we can find a similar history between David and Absalom. Why Absalom rebelled against his father? There can be many reasons, but today I want to answer it with a relationship problem.

Through the message of the last Sunday we learned that Absalom returned to Jerusalem, but he could not see David’s face for two years. Do you remember why David didn’t meet Absalom for a long time although he loved his son? It was because David wanted that Absalom might repent of his sins. David wanted to restore his relationship with his son, but he knew that the true restoration could come only by God. Absalom needed to restore his spiritual relationship with God by repentance. But did he repent? No! We can know that he did not repent because he set Joab’s field on fire to ask him to see the king. It was not a God’s way. God was not in the trick of Absalom. Finally Absalom could meet his father, and David kissed him. It means that David accepted him. He knew that Absalom did not repent, but why David accepted him? I think that it is the heart of father toward his son. David saw that Absalom was not spiritual enough to repent. And he loved his son. His love was not spiritual love, but his heart to forgive and accept his son is the heart of our heavenly Father who loves us. As our heavenly Father sacrificed Himself to forgive us when we were not ready to repent, David wanted to forgive his son although this was not ready to repent. By the kiss of David to Absalom, it seemed that their relationship was restored, but the heart of Absalom was not sincere and their relationship was superficial.

Please see verse 1. “In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.” How long is ‘in the course of time’? One year? Two years? No! King James Version (KJV) and English Standard Version (ESV) translate it as “after this”. It shows that this story happened immediately after the superficial restoration of relationship between David and Absalom. What did Absalom do? He provided himself with a chariot and horse and with fifty men to run ahead of him. Do you know what this action meant? When Adonijah put himself forward and said: “I will be king”, he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him (1King 1:5). The action of Absalom showed that he wanted to be king. He wanted to attract the attention of the people to himself with an appearance of king. David was alive and had not appointed him as his successor. Then it was a rebellion against David’s kingdom.

We have to observe that this action of Absalom was done immediately after he returned to the palace. It means that Absalom had planned his rebellion against his father before being accepted by David. When did he plan it? We don’t know it. Maybe when he was in Jerusalem and could not see his father for two years, he felt very sorry with David and planned his rebellion. Or maybe when he had to flee to Geshur after killing his brother Amnon and lived there for three years as a fugitive, he felt very resentful and planned to take his father’s kingdom. Or maybe when he heard that his sister was raped by Amnon and saw that David did not punish him, Absalom felt so angry that he planned to kill Amnon and take the kingdom from David. We do not know exactly when he planned it, but we can know that Absalom planned his rebellion against his father for a long time. He was a careful man. He waited two years to take revenge on Amnon and four years to steal the hearts of the people of Israel. He was a very able man, but he was not a spiritual man and he acted against God, finally his life finished very miserably.

Why do you think that Absalom rose in rebellion against his father? Because he was ambitious and he thought that he could not be king? Absalom was the third son de David, the firstborn was Amnon, the second was Daniel and the forth was Adonijah (1Cr.3:1-2). Amnon was dead and the Bible does not say about Daniel, it means that he was not a candidate to be king for some reasons. Then Absalom could be legal successor of David. Although he killed Amnon, his sins could be forgiven by God if he had repented and his crime could be justified because it came from Amnon’s crime. Maybe he felt that the king did not want raise him as his successor.

Anyway, one of the reasons that I am sure of is that the relationship between David and Absalom was very bad. In David’s side maybe he thought that his relationship with Absalom was okay because he loved his son, but in Absalom’s side he did not love his father, perhaps he hated his father. A good relationship can be formed when the both side feel that their relationship is good. Although David loved Absalom, his son did not know it, because David did not know how to show his love to his sons. David did not know it maybe because he had not received the love of his father. David did not show his love to his sons maybe because he was very busy for much work and did not have enough time. David was a great king, but was not a good father. He did not attend his sons when they were in difficulties. Some times my wife told me that I did not know how to attend my son. Really I do not know it, because I did not receive the love of my father. I have very poor experience with him because he was not at home for his business matters. So I do not know how I can be good father. And always I have been busy for much work. When I was in Venezuela, I had to serve the God’s ministry and do my business, so I did not have much time to share my life with my children. When my family moved to LA, I thought that I would have more time to share with them, but I could not do it enough for my study and other things. Then I could know that it is the question of priority. All of us have 24 hours a day and we spend it according to our priority. If I do something, it is because I put my priority on it. If I think that to attend my children is very important, I have to put my priority on it. Msn. Isaac Kim told me before departing to Redding: “You worked very hard in Venezuela and did not have time to share with your children. Go trail with them and pass time with them.” I felt that he told me it very sincerely for his experience. Our missionaries of the first generation of UBF lived very sacrificial life. They put all their priority on serving sheep and God’s ministry. I heard that their children complained because their parents never had time for them although there were always available for their Bible students. Now we have many children and juniors in our ministry. And they are our sons and daughters. Now it is time to put our priority on them so that they may be great servants of God.

The relationship between David and Absalom was broken when Absalom killed Amnon and fled to Geshur. After that David did not see him for five years. Maybe David waited for his repentance, but he did not do anything to restore the relationship with his son. He should look for Absalom and go to Geshur to meet him, but he did not do it. Fiver years later he kissed Absalom and accepted him, but it had passed so long time and already the heart of Absalom was very far from David. And their relationship was superficial. The heart of Absalom was very wounded. Maybe he felt that he was a victim for the sin of Amnon. And he suffered much for his own sins. If he had repented and received the forgiveness of God, he could be healed and joyful. And his life could be blessing by the grace of God. But he did not repent and his life was destroyed. He needed to be healed by the love of God and the love of his father. David had to talk with his son asking him: why did you commit such terrible sins, my son? David had to have one to one Bible study with his son and help him to repent. The true restoration can be realized in the truth of God, so not only Absalom but also David had to repent of their sins before God. Then they had to confess their sins one another and forgive one another, and they would be healed. James 5:16 says: “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” If David had spiritual restoration with Absalom and they accepted one another with the love of God, Absalom would not rebel against his father.

Really in many cases our relationship with others is very superficial. Even among us in this church we may have superficial relationship with others. Some members not even say hello to others! As you know I lived in a Latin American country for almost 17 years. The Hispanic people are very worm-hearted. In Latin America, it is common for men and women to kiss one another on the cheek. One day a woman hugged me very strongly and kissed me. For my first year in Venezuela, it was very difficult for me because of my Korean culture. But after adapting me to the Latin American culture I became to like it because I could felt more the love between us by that way. So when I met the people, I greeted them with kiss and hug. Several years ago, when I came to Chicago I met a shepherdess from a Latin American country and I was very happy for seeing her and kissed her unconsciously, but later I felt that she was embarrassed and I understood that she had lost Latin American culture in USA. At the same time I understood that I had been changed like Hispanic people and I thanked God for it. Maybe we say hello to one another, but we maintain our superficial relationship with others. If we have any conflict with someone, we do not want to meet him. And we live with wounded heart like Absalom. We cut our relationship with others and suffer for our resentment. It is a very unhappy life. Anybody wants to live like Absalom? No! Then we need to be healed and forgiven by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 53:5 says: “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and ***by his wounds we are healed***.” ***In Jesus who was wounded for us we can be healed.*** ***In Jesus who forgave us we can be restored.*** ***In Jesus who loved us by giving his life for us we can love one another.*** Please look at your brothers and sisters in Christ who are around you! Can you see their wounded hearts? Can you feel their sufferings? Please say them: **“Jesus healed your wounded heart.”** If you need restore relationship with anyone, please look for him and share with him the grace and love of Jesus with sincere heart. Then God will restore you and your friend and you will be blessing and happy in Christ.

Because Absalom did not repent and his relationship with David was broken, he carried out the plan of rebellion against his father. What did he do? Please, look v2. “He would *get up early* and *stand by the side of the road* leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would *call out to him*, “What town are you from?” He would answer, “Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.”” His plan was to be popular among the people and be approved by them. In that sense he was a very smart guy. And he was very diligent to get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate everyday. He was very intelligent to attend the people and stand on their side. He was very patient to do it for four years. ***But in him there was not truth.*** He said to the people: ***“Your claims are valid and proper”*** without investigating the cases. He lied saying: ***“There is no representative of the king to hear you. If only I were appointed judge in the land!”*** Whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. As you know Absalom was very handsome. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him. He was highly praised for his handsome appearance in all Israel. As Msn. John Kwon told in the message of the last week, Tom Cruise is not as perfect as Absalom for his short height, which is 5ft 7. I think that maybe Brad Pitt can be compared with Absalom because his height is 5ft 11. He looked very perfect as Absalom in the movie “Troy”. When that handsome guy reached out his hand, took hold of them and kissed them, the people of the Israel lost their mind for Absalom. The handsome appearance can be blessing or not. I think that Absalom was destroyed for his handsome appearance. Because all Israel praised him for his appearance, he became proud thinking that he deserved be king of Israel. 1Peter 5:5 says: “… God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” The pride is the enemy of God. We should be humble to be used for his work of salvation. So I thank God because I am not handsome like Brad Pitt. If I would handsome, I would not be pastor, but Hollywood star. So I thank God for it. Brothers and sisters, please do not consider appearance and height, but see the heart of the people if he or she loves God or not, if he or she has faith or not.

The attitude of Absalom was very similar to the characteristics of the devil. John 8:44 says: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” The devil is murderer and liar. Also he looked like an angel of light. But there is not truth in him. Also in Absalom there was not truth. The people were deceived by Absalom. The Bible says that Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel. The word ‘steal’ has negative meaning. ***To steal is to take something from someone illegally***. Then, whose should be the hearts of the people of Israel? It should be of David? Partially it is correct, because David was the king of Israel. But who raised David as king? It was God. Israel was the chosen people by God. So ***the hearts of the people of Israel should be with God***. Absalom stole them from God. He robbed the people from God. Who robbed the mankind from God? It was Satan. The behavior of Absalom was the work of Satan, who committed rebellion against God. We should know who God is and who we are. God is the Creator and we are his creatures. What is the purpose of our life? It is to glorify God. We live to glorify God who sacrificed himself to save us from the death and give us the eternal life. We never should take the glory of God for us. God blessed us so much and gave us all things that we needed. ***Most of all God gave us this new life in Christ.*** Then we should live for God. We should offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

1Co.10:31 says: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” It is my key verse of this year. When I was in Venezuela for about 17 years, I thought that I was serving God’s ministry for His glory. About 6 months ago, when I left from Venezuela to come to LA for my study in the seminary, I had to abandon many things: successful business, comfortable life, growing ministry, etc. Most of all it was not easy to leave from the ministry where I had put my life. Sometimes I felt sad for thinking that I was being forgotten in the ministry of God. But this situation let me revise myself again. ***Whose ministry is it?*** God’s ministry? Or my ministry? ***For whom did I work?*** For God? Or for me? I could know that there was my sinful desire to seek my own glory in place of God’s glory. In other words, I was stealing God’s glory for me. God had blessed my life abundantly. He blessed the ministry, the business and the family. They were for the glory of God. But I was taking them for me. So I repent of my sins before God. I pray that I may live for the glory of God in all things that I do. A few days ago, Msn. Isaac Kim and Rebecca Kim moved to Redding. He had put his love to God in this ministry for more than 30 years. It was not easy decision, I can understand it a little, and it was a great decision for God. So I admire him because he showed us an example of life for the glory of God. All of us have the same way to go. God, who is the Lord of our LA UBF ministry, wants that we may love him and serve him with all our hearts, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength for his glory. May God bless each of us to glorify him through all our lives. Amen.