

FATHER, CRY FOR YOUR CHILDREN NOW – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, Dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

I greet you, friends, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Today, I want to speak on *Father, Cry for Your Children Now*. Our text is taken from 2 Samuel 18, reading at Verse 32.

2 Samuel 18:32-

³² And the king said to the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

So the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!"

³³ Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!"

2 Samuel 19:1-

¹ And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." ² So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." ³ And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. ⁴ But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Let us pray

PRAYER:

Thank You Father for this time when we can come again to reason with You in Your Word. Speak to all, O God, in radioland, in Jesus' Name. Amen!

Father, Cry for Your Children Now

We read about the tragedy of an Israelite Family whose affairs has been exposed to us. You may ask, why did God expose the affairs of the family of King David to us? It is for the purpose of teaching us, convincing us of our own errors – in proving our lives and our character; and to help us cultivate our minds and morals with the ultimate aim of making us mature and well equipped for successful Christian living. That's what 2 Timothy 3: 16 and 17 says.

Some of us would protest if God decides to make the affairs of our family public; some of us might even be more embarrassed than David was. As we observe Fathers' Day or Men's Day, may I admonish fathers to cry for their children now in the light of the painful experience of King David.

First, let me compare and contrast David's family with ours. In terms of comparison, King David's family was like ours in that it consisted of father, mother, children with growing pains that family had joys and sorrows like ours. But David's family was unlike ours in terms of its status. It was a royal family. David's family was different from ours in terms of its size – it was quite a large family: six wives and their children; not counting concubines. David's family was different from ours in terms of social dynamics. It had experienced adultery, murder, rape, revenge killing treason leading to civil war that claimed thousands of lives.

So that's the comparison and contrast.

What of the context – David's family: the Context.

Our story centers on the last observation I made, and that is, treason that led to civil war that claimed so many lives in Israel. The remote cause of the civil war was that Amnon, David's first son raped his half-sister Tamar. And Tamar was Absalom's sister. When King David heard of it he was very angry. And there is no evidence that he did anything else. Absalom for this reason hated Amnon but did not say a word either to him. Two years later he organized a party, not for fun but for revenge. The King resisted giving him permission to invite Amnon; but Absalom pressed and got the King's permission.

In the party, he instructed his servants to kill Amnon. We find that in 2 Samuel 13. The king and all his servants wept very bitterly over the tragedy. In 2 Samuel 13:36. But Absalom escaped to the safety of the King of Geshur his grandfather where he spent three years of self-imposed exile. Joab the commander of the armies of Israel prevailed on the king to bring Absalom back, and he travelled personally to Geshur to bring Absalom to Jerusalem. King David refused to see Absalom for two years.

Within that time resentment and rebellion started building up in Absalom. He secretly and methodically stole the hearts of the people of Israel: according to 2 Samuel 15:6 – with the pretext that they were going to Hebron to pay the vow he made to God when he was in Geshur. Absalom planned and executed a coupe against his father, and declared himself king over Israel. To avoid the bloodbath, King David tactically withdrew from Jerusalem his capital. To cut this long story short, Absalom's rebellion escalated to civil war between his supporters and the supporters of the king. Before the battle was joined, David warned all his commanders to ensure the safety of Absalom because he loved him dearly.

Joab did not listen to the king, and killed Absalom, who was left hanging helplessly when his long hairs got caught in the branch of a terebinth tree when he tried to flee from the warfront.

Father, cry for your children now

The news of Absalom's death devastated David, and he wept uncontrollably and bitterly. That's where we read in our text. David would have preferred to die in Absalom's place – even though Absalom was determined to kill him. You see that in verse 33. What a father! But David's cry came too late: Absalom was dead.

All fathers, may we cry for our children before it is too late. Somebody made this observation, "Do not save your loving speeches for your friends till they are dead. Do not write them on their tombstones – speak them rather now, instead." And I will add: do not save your sorrowful tears for your children till they are dead. Do not drop those tears on their coffins. Shed them rather now.

Crying for our children! How? How do we cry for your children? There are three ways we cry:

- We cry to ourselves.

This does not do anything but generate self-pity and make us feel sorry to ourselves. Self-pity is a dead end that leads nowhere. It incapacitates you, makes you feel a kind of anger that has no focus. It makes you feel that your circumstance is most peculiar – not common to any other person. But that's not true; for 1 Corinthians 10:13:

1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³ *No temptation [or circumstance] has overtaken to you which is not common to all men*

Self-pity can prevent you from making any progress in life. So we cry to ourselves sometimes:

- Sometimes we cry before people. Crying before people does one of two things:
 - i. It could produce sympathy for people,

- ii. Or in the vernacular of the *Igbos*: *ntọọ*. And what that means, it serves you right. Physician heal yourself.

I recall that there was a servant of God in Nigeria who lost his wife. And he was being used mightily by God to pray for people who were sick, and they would recover. But the wife was sick, and died, and a newsman: reporter said, why wouldn't he have prayed for his wife; and yet he was praying for others, and they were recovering.

More often than not people say these kinds of things behind your back. But God who knows the hearts of men knew that some people would rejoice when others weep, and weep when others rejoice. And that's why he commands in Romans 12 verse 15:

Romans 12:15

¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

He would not have given that command if the probability did not exist.

Let me conclude by saying that, sympathy is an emotional response. You feel sorry for a person in need or in trouble but do not really understand what the person is feeling or experiencing. Sympathy could move you to act even in limited ways.

Friends, we would conclude this message next time. For now, I want to say again to fathers, cry for your children before it is too late. And if you are a father, and you have not given your life to Christ, this is the time to do so, so you can then cry meaningfully for your son, for your daughter – for your children now. Why don't you say, Jesus, I'm a sinner; forgive me. Come into my heart and save me.

PRAYER:

Father, we want to thank You for this time we have spent in your Word. And I commit into Your hands my friends in radioland, and especially those who are giving their lives to the Saviour. And I say, receive them and give them assurance of Your salvation; and come into their lives, into their homes; and rectify what needs to be rectified, and glorify Yourself thereby...in Jesus' Name. Amen!