

To Advance or Retreat?

2 Samuel 15:14 - 15

Nutshell: The Gospel is always in advance mode, though we ourselves may at times need to retreat.

Context: Absalom's moves to take over the kingdom.

Text

2 Sam 15:14 And David said to all his servants who *were* with him in Jerusalem,

"Rise up, and we will flee; for we have no escape from the face of Absalom. Make haste to leave, lest he hastens and overtakes us and thrusts calamity on us and strikes the city with the mouth of the sword."

Literal Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

Review

- A. The whole OT is the story of the coming deliverer, Messiah
 - 1. *Foretold* as the Satan-crushing seed of Eve, a human, Gen 3:15
 - 2. *Believed on* from the start, as by Abel, Heb 11:4, though also counterfeited and contradicted, as in Cain, Jude 1:11
 - 3. Promised *through Abraham*, Gal 3:14-16
 - 4. Our *need* of Messiah confirmed by our transgression of the **Law**, Gal 3:11-13; 17-18
 - 5. Pictured as **ruler** through kings such as David, Ps 89:35-37, but counter-imaged in leaders such as Saul, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 says David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident, but he 'lost a step' afterwards, 2 Chron 17:3
- C. David was God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for later kings of Judah, 2 Kings 14:3
 - 1. Anointed as king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5.

2. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- D. **DAVID'S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING***
 1. Defeat Jebus (Jerusalem)- Goliath's head there, 1 Sam 17:54
 2. Retrieve the Ark, rightly, 2 Chron 6:1-19 after wrongly 15:2
 3. Plan a permanent form for the Tabernacle: the Temple.
 4. 1 Sam 20:14 oath in 2 Sam 9. *OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.
- E. David's sin and its consequences
 1. David murdered to cover adultery, Ch 11. Now David, though forgiven, *would see continued violence*, ch 12
 2. Chap 13, Amnon, by deceit, raped his half-sister, Tamar.
 - a. Absalom took his heroic sister in **but** advised silence
 - b. After 2 yrs., Absalom killed Amnon, then fled
 3. David's heart was towards Absalom (13:39; 14:1)
 - a. Joab's wise woman bound David to God's priority of *family line over capital punishment*, chap 14
 - b. Absalom is returned, and finally to David's presence
 4. Signs of **Absalom's** vanity (14:25-27; 15:1) solidify in his quest to promote real justice in the land, 15:2-6
 - a. But his actual desire was to be king, 15:7-10,
 - b. deceitfully using a worship vow to advance his plot, 11-13
- F. *In 2 Samuel 15:14-15, David decisively plans escape, and his servants know to trust him.*

Outline:

- I. David Sees that They Must Escape, 15:14
- II. David's Servants are Ready to Obey, 15:15
 - A. They know David
 - B. His decisiveness is part of his wisdom from God
- III. Does Jesus Counsel Mainly Advance or Retreat for the Church?
 - A. A Last Things (Eschatology) angle
 - B. Four Areas
 1. Jesus' example
 2. Jesus' counsel
 3. The Apostles' example
 4. The Apostles' counsel

Kid-speak: Last time, a good messenger came to tell David that most of the people of Israel were now following __? Ab_____

G. 2 Sam 15:14, from front page

1. We see that David already had a healthy suspicion of Absalom. He's immediately ready to escape. No questions or confusion.
2. Should he have prepared beforehand *based on* the suspicion?
3. No. Our chronicler has been telling us about Absalom's activities, but they were 'below the radar' for anyone not a conspirator, *as proved by* the 200 who went with him in innocent ignorance.

H. Escape was the right option at this point

1. As with all his previous escapes, especially from Saul
2. In a siege, Absalom's army would be an eventually overwhelming force
3. Knowing when and where to concede ground is wisdom

I. David envisioned the likely haste of Absalom's attack and knew they must match the haste in their escape

1. And he knew Absalom would be lethal
2. Who had taught Absalom his war strategies?
 - a. Probably specific tutors, probably including David.
 - b. David would have known what other tutors had taught Absalom

2 Sam 15:15 And the king's servants said to the king,

"According to all that my lord the king desires, behold, *here are* your servants."

J. David's servants are in good order.

1. They've observed David all along, and so they trust him
 - a. They've seen that David trusts God, not himself. He trusts *away from* himself.
 - b. That encourages them to follow David's example, trusting God, *and* assures them that he won't be thinking selfishly
 - c. Note that they count his repentance in the Uriah matter sincere and complete, with no lingering caveats

Kid-speak: David's servants trusted him as their king. What King do *we* trust?

2. David's decisiveness makes their compliance easier
 - a. A leader has to be able to finalize decisions
 - b. Sometimes he has to do it quickly, as in an emergency
3. David's wisdom included decisiveness
 - a. He had to deal with any doubts in his mind privately- and quickly
 - b. He likely even considered the expedience of a quick war council. No time even for that- based on where Absalom or one of his generals *could be* right now.

Kid-speak: Being **decisive** means being *wise about something that's hard to decide*. Do we need to be decisive?

K. Does Jesus ever counsel retreat?

1. That is a huge question
2. It might not necessarily be best answered in those terms. The question might be better put: Does Jesus have a basically defensive or offensive strategy for His Church?
3. Or this: Until Jesus' final victory, what is our relationship to a world that was/ is hostile to Jesus?

L. How we answer this question tends to reveal our view of the nature of the Church generally (Ecclesiology) and what God plans for the Church on earth more particularly (part of Eschatology)

1. Does God plan for the Christian population to exceed the unbelieving population, eventually becoming the dominant world power? That's **POST-MILLENNIALISM**.
2. (**A-Millennialism** *tends* towards ↑ Post-Millennialism, since, like **POST-Millennialism**, it sees Satan's binding in Rev 20:2-3 in *the present Church age*. But a realistic A-Mil might lean more towards Pre-Millennialism ↓)
3. Or does God plan for the Church to always remain the "few" in proportion to the "many" unbelievers in the world? (Matt 7:14) That is what most **Pre-Millennialists** hold.

- a. At this point, **Pre-Mil** has been associated more with a *pessimistic* outlook.
- b. I do not share this pessimism. In fact, I believe an optimistic Christian view of the present, grounded in 2 Cor 2:14-17, is properly the domain of **Pre-Mils**!
- c. (POST-Mils group **A-mils** with **Pre-Mils**, since **A-Mils**, however optimistic they might generally be, hold to a huge falling away at the end, like **Pre-Mils**)
4. Importantly, though Satan is not yet completely bound, he is *restricted*, as in the book of Job
- M. So if the Church is *not* going to gain world dominance, how do we relate to an unbelieving world *and* a ‘loose’ Satan?
 1. Let’s answer by considering **four areas**: First, Jesus’ *personal* response to confrontation; then,
 2. Jesus’ *counsel* to us on confrontation;
 3. the *Apostles’* response to confrontation in Acts; and
 4. the Apostles’ *counsel* to us in the Epistles
- N. Jesus’ example on confrontation:

Jesus both *avoided* confrontation **and** He *didn’t* avoid it.

 1. He *avoided* confrontation
 - ☆ a. He didn’t court danger, Jn 7:1; 11:53-54 (*Even though* He knew He could not be harmed until God allowed it)
 - b. Up until “His hour,” Jesus got out of dangerous situations, e.g., Lk 4:29-30
 - c. He modeled retreat, but it was because it “wasn’t His hour,” Jn 7:30; 8:20; Then His hour came, 12:23; 13:1
 2. **ON THE OTHER HAND**, He *didn’t* avoid confrontation
 - a. He generally taught boldly in the Temple, Jn 18:20

Kid-speak: Did Jesus stay away from people who wanted to hurt Him? Y__. **But** did He also tell everybody the truth, even if He knew it would get Him into trouble? Y__.

- b. When “His hour” came, He underwent suffering, Isa 53:7
- c. He was passive, not resisting attack/ persecution, Jn 18:36
3. Conclusion: Though we don’t have a coming, known, specified “hour,” like Jesus, we are to 1) use sanctified common sense;

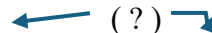
2) be bold; and 3) submit to suffering when it is upon us

APPLICATIONS

O. Jesus' counsel to us

1. Jesus from the start seemed to indicate our **persecution** as a **norm**, Matt 5:10-12
2. Jesus told us to escape when chased, Matt 10:23
3. But when caught, testify, Lk 12:11-12

P. Consider the Apostles' examples in Acts:

1. Paul escaped, Acts 9:25; 17:10, 14; (20:1)  (?)
2. Escape can just mean a new evangelism field, Acts 14:6-7; (20:1)

Q. Finally, how do the Apostles *tell us* to respond

1. 1 Peter is a book **about** suffering persecution *
 - a. If persecution was not an expected norm, this book would become dusty history
 - b. Peter tells us to endure suffering, just not as wrongdoers, and that our main war is against our own wrong desires, 1 Pet 2:11

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2. Pray for deliverance, Rom 15:30-31; 2 Thess 3:1-2

**Kid-speak:** Should we pray that God won't let people hurt us?

3. 1 Thess 2:8, Factor Satanic hindrance into our equations (viz., Satan's binding in Rev 20 *isn't* in this present age), 1 Pet 5:8
  - a. He'll do his worst (which, again, is Divinely limited)
  - b. God will use it to test us. The Gospel will triumph *anyway*!
4. We haven't 'lost' during persecution,
  - a. 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Tim 4:17 (Prov 28:15?); 2 Cor 1:8-9;
  - \* b. 1 Pet 2:15, 20; 3:14; 4:12, 13-14, 15, 16, 19

**Kid-speak:** But if God lets people hurt us, will He still be with us?

### R. SO- now that we've heard our Lord's counsel, do *we* answer Him as David's servants answered him?

1. It's easier when we're not on the run.
  - a. It's OK to have easier periods, even generations. Jesus was

avored, apparently for a good while, Lk 2:52

b. Plus, pleasing God invites His pacifying influences in/ with our enemies, Prov 16:7

2. Therein lies one essential in remembering our persecuted brothers like we were there with them, Heb 13:3

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1Thess5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) Even in a whole *life* that seems to be retreat, God supplies plenty of advance. We must learn how to receive it.

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V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?**

How have I lost righteousness?

Do I advance only in the flesh? Are my retreats my avoidance of walking in the Spirit?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):

How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?

I will not confuse egotistical bravado with Gospel boldness on the one hand *nor* excuse myself from representing Christ on some pretended justification on the other.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**

O God, help me to be firmly resolute in the *truth*, quietly confident in *it*, not myself, and wise in detecting danger.

Vision: To advance or retreat?

God’s cause never fails, but it is very much ‘couched’ in weakness- even offense, 1 Cor 1:21, 23; but go to v 24, and in whom is the Gospel powerful? In us who believe!

But even there, the Gospel’s power is best manifested in our- ? weakness, 2 Cor 12:10!

As to our relationship to the world: the Gospel = God’s triumphant power, both in its reception and in its denial, 2 Cor 2:14-17.

But again, how are we to deliver the Gospel message to our neighbor? 1 Peter 3:15, “in meekness and fear.”

So- advance or retreat?

The Gospel always advances when it is proclaimed. When the Gospel conquers *us*, its power is manifested in our humility. When our faithfulness to God invites persecution, we are even more a witness in how we bear it, hoping in God (1 Peter, Q. 4. B.)