

## “Love Ignites Love!”

### I. INTRO:

A. Asia Bibi: Read page. Watch Video.

B. Pray.

C. Slide #1 2 Samuel closes w/2 national calamities: a drought caused by King Saul’s sin(21), & a plague caused by King David’s sin(24). In between these 2 tragic events we’ll see 4 victories.

D. Outline: Sin, Retribution, Compassion.

### II. SIN! (1)

A. Nowhere in Scripture are we told **when** or **why** Saul slaughtered the Gibeonites.

1. Saul killed several but intended to **wipe them all out**, so it was a case of “ethnic cleansing” & genocide.

2. Another weird twist...**Jeiel**(Ja-EYE-I), Saul’s great-grandfather was the ancestor of the Gibeonites(1 Chron.9:35-39). *So he slaughtered his own relatives.*

a) Slide #2 Gibeon was located in the tribe of Benjamin’s territory (which was Saul’s tribe). Maybe that is a clue to his behavior?

b) It was bad enough they had to live in Israel, but in my neighborhood? [Maybe Saul was the 1st to coin the phrase, “Not in my neighborhood!”]

B. Slide #3 3 years passed before David took the famine seriously to heart; or realized that it might have a special cause.

1. 1st year, “huh, an unexpected change in weather?” (El Nino);

2nd year, “It’s bound to improve”; 3rd year, David sought the face of the Lord.

a) At 1st I said, “David it took you 3 years to figure that out?” You’re slipping!

(1) Then God whispered in my heart, “How long to you take to figure out things?”  
*3 years didn’t seem so long!*

C. Strange reason for a famine!

1. Story is in Joshua 9 (read 9:4-6; 14-16,18,21). At a time when God had told them to take/conqueror the land.

2. They obtained Joshua’s oath by *fraud*, but God regarded it **binding**.

### III. RETRIBUTION! (2-9)

- A. We today, who have the NT, & understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, view this episode with mingled **disgust & dismay**.
1. But we must keep in mind that we're dealing with **law**, not **grace**; & **Israel**, not the **church**.
  2. We must keep in mind though, the death of the 7 men was not **atonement** but **legal retribution**.
- B. Saul had been dead for over 30 years, & the Lord had patiently waited for this sin to be dealt with. This was **"Deferred Retribution!"** (i.e. Postponed punishment) **Slide #4**
1. **Deferred Retribution?** - Yes, maybe like, **"Wait till your father gets home."**
  2. Some this postponed punishment is 30 minutes, 30 days, or in this case 30 years.
    - a) Often Gods looong-suffering waits out a persons whole life...& then deals with it then.
    - b) Often there thought as **forgotten sins**...but they're NOT forgotten!
      - (1) **Slide #4b** Prov.8:36 **he who sins against me wrongs his own soul;**
    - c) Thats why *the gospel message* includes, **"For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."** Jer.31:34
- C. The gibeonites **didn't want money**; they knew that no amount of money could ransom a murderer or recompense the survivors.
1. **Slide #5** Saul should have known...**Numb.35:33,34** **you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.**
- D. How is it that they can leave the bodies hanging on the tree? **Slide #6** There is a law written in Deut.21:22,23 which reads, **If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land** which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.
- E. What was the reason for this law? **So that**...(why there is a famine, Saul defiled the land)
- F. How does that explain the **exception** that is made here? The land was **already** defiled.
1. Deut.28:1-4 **He would send rain to the land if His people would honor & obey Him.**
- G. The beginning of **barley harvest**(vs.9 - April) **till** the **late rains**(vs.10 - Oct). **5/6 months!**

#### IV. **COMPASSION! (10-14)**

- A. (10) It was a heathen practice to expose to ridicule the hung body; Remember the *Gibeonites* were not bound by the laws of Israel.
- B. **Rizpah!** **Picture:** a women, alone, keeping watch day & night over the dead, unburied bodies of her 2 sons & Saul's 5 grandsons. Keeping watch from **wild dogs & carnivorous vultures**. **Alone, weary, on a rock. That's got to be creepy, in the pitch black of night, you &...7 rotting corpses.**  
 [Story: I was creeped out, night, hiking alone, coyotes around]
1. **Some** I'm sure would see her as *the crazy women* of town. **Others** would see her **dedication as an act of love & courage** on her sons & nephews.
  2. **She couldn't keep them from being hung, but she could watch that no further dishonor be done to their bodies.**
    - a) There she is...she is still there, she is still mourning, she is still loving, she's still praying, she's still interceding, she's still mediating.
    - b) Look at your **bulletin covers**, a painting by *Gustave Dore*.
    - c) **Slide #7 Joseph Turner** painted one of the most famous of these pictures. **The 7 bodies** are depicted lying on the rock, covered w/sackcloth. Rizpah has her face covered w/1 hand; w/the other she waves a lighted torch to frighten off wild animals. A lion crouches near, & a bird of prey circles in the air.
  3. Her **sackcloth** (**Course cloth** woven from the hair of goats & camels) spread out to shield her from the hot summer sun by day, & to rest on at night.
  4. **What Faith!** - She believed, sooner or later, God would deliver the land from famine & her dear ones might at least have an honorable burial.
  5. **Rizpah's name has come to mean intense suffering, such as only a devoted mother can endure.**
    - a) Rizpah, in her suffering, typifies thousand's of *wives, daughters, & sisters*, either **sitting by the bedside** of loved ones **or mourning at their death**.
    - b) **Slide #8** A present day photo that grabbed our hearts & minds recently was when a chocolate Lab named *Hawkeye*, walked down the isle & faithfully laid at the coffin of his master, fallen Navy SEAL Petty Officer *Jon T. Tumilson*, for the whole service!
  6. **Slide #9 Rizpah** had to endure the death of her 1st husband **Saul** (along with the knowledge of his beheading & mutilation of his body). **Then**, she was fought over by **Abner**(Saul's general) & **Ishbosheth**(Saul's youngest son). **Abner won, but then was stabbed by Joab**. So, she lost her 1st husband, 2nd husband, she only has left her 2 sons **Armoni & Mephibosheth** whom she now just witnessed being executed.
    - a) And now, a unrelenting perpetual death. One you cant bury, or get past, or move on.
  7. **Rizpah** who once worn queenly garments while a concubine in Saul's court, **now** donned sackcloth for mourning.
  8. **Rizpah** is one of literature's most beautiful/tragic examples of a mother's love.

- a) In spite of her circumstances, she got through with **determinate devotion** and **love** that **birthed hope** in her heart.
- b) We wonder if her story suggested **Alfred Lord Tennyson's, Rizpah**, which transfers a resolute devotion to a **different but equally tragic** setting. [The Lawyers hung her son for stealing, which he did on a dare]

(1) Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left -  
 I stole them all from the lawyers - and you, will you call it a theft? - My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had laughed and had cried -  
 Theirs? O, no! they are mine - not theirs - they had moved in my side.  
 Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd `em, I buried `em all - I can't dig deep, I am old - in the night by the churchyard wall. My Willy'll rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment'll sound, But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

C. Are you a woman of Tragedy? A man of Tragedy?

1. *Tragedy* = (def.) an event causing great *suffering, destruction, & distress*.
2. **Maybe the tragedy is with your** spouse, your kids, your parents, your job, your friends, your co-workers, your dreams, your hopes, ...*maybe all the above?*
3. **How did she get through it?** She wasn't deterred by her hunger, by exhaustion, by the stench of the decomposing bodies, by her own grief, by hopelessness of her situation, by the reactions of others who passed by; **but her tribulation worked patience, and her patience experience, and her experience hope. She never gave up!** She loved, and because she loved she was devoted, and because she was devoted she persevered, and because she persevered it gave birth to hope in her heart.
4. **How do you get through it? How do I get through?** Hope. You see when you lose hope, you lose everything.
5. I was talking last night to **Lori Fischer** at Starbucks. She was saying so many of our friends (our age) dealing w/the deaths of our grandparents, parents!

D. (11) **Slide #10 Love Ignites Love!** (Read vs.11, David following Rizpah's lead)

1. **Paul echoes Rizpah's sentiment and passion in 1 Corinthians 13, does he not?** 'Love suffers long. Love is kind. Love endures all things. Love never fails'.

a) **Slide #11** Shakespeare's 116th sonnet:

'Love is not love  
 Which alters when it alteration finds...  
 O no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken...  
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom!'

2. The devotion of *her love became contagious*; even stirring the kings heart to treat with similar honors the remains of Saul & Jonathan.
  3. **Fire spreads itself w/o depleting itself.** Go on doing what is right at all costs; it will stir others to deeds of heroic zeal!
- E. So David brought the whole family: Saul, Jonathan, & these 7, & gave them a proper burial in their family tomb.
1. To have a proper burial with one's ancestors was the desire of every Israelite.
- F. (14) **After that God heeded the prayer for the land.**
1. Falling rain(10b) proved that the famine was ended.
- G. We compliment David on how swift he moved, as soon as he understood the problem; & dealt drastically with **sin** for the sake of the nation.
- H. **Slide #12** If love ignites love; or love inspires love; **Who inspires you?**
1. **Who inspires you** as: a **writer**, a **thinker**, a **preacher**, a radio/TV **talk show host**?
  2. **Who inspires you to dig deeper** in Gods word?
  3. **Who inspires you as an athlete?**
    - a) **Kelly** saw women running a marathon, w/2 artificial legs; inspires her to run on diff days
  4. **Who inspires you to care** for the homeless; for someone that is hurting; for those less fortunate than you?
  5. **Who inspires you to be hospitable?**
  6. **Who inspires you to w/their lifestyle?**
    - a) Quote: "**A recent study showed that there are 3 things you can't teach to people: lifestyle, morals, and attitudes.**" [They really need to be shown!] (Leadership)
    - b) I'm challenged by Francis Chan's lifestyle I read about in his book **Crazy Love**.
    - c) I'm challenged by David Platt's lifestyle challenge in his book **Radical**.
    - d) I'm challenged by Richard Stearn's lifestyle change in **Hole In The Gospel**.
  7. **Who inspires you to love others?**
    - a) **David Eubank** (FBR); **Steve Gumaer** (Partners) "Free & Full lives for the children of Burma".
  8. **What movie has inspired you?** Courageous! - A MUST to see. (4 Law Enforcement Officers learning courage & honor start at home)
    - a) Film by Sherwood Pictures(Sherwood Bapt Church, Albany Georgia) *Facing the Giants/Fireproof*
  9. **What music inspires you?**
- I. **Who have you Inspired? Who will you Inspire this week?**

1. **Mother Theresa** inspired so many to love others, and thus, '**Missionaries of Charity**' was born. It was established in 1950. **It now consists of over 4,500 sisters and is active in 133 countries.** Members must adhere to the vows of **chastity, poverty, & obedience**, and the fourth vow, **to give "Wholehearted and Free service to the poorest of the poor"**.
- J. We all know of another time, 3000 years later in history, another hanging of 3 men, with another woman at the foot of the cross (& others).
1. **Slide #13 In St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh.** There's a impressive stained glass window in the church, and it portrays a picture of the crucifixion. There at Calvary are these three crosses, and the Lord at the centre, two thieves either side. But the artist portrays a great throng around the foot of the cross, and that whole crowd is turned facing the spectacle. The guide at the Cathedral points out, that right at the bottom right-hand corner there was **a face** that was not looking toward the cross, but was looking toward us. The reason was to draw us into the crowd **Slide #13b** - to realize that we had a part, our sin laid on Him.
  2. Those ghastly corpses might well have affrighted **Rizpah**, especially by night, **but in our Lord**, at whose foot of the cross we are sitting, there is nothing revolting, but everything **attractive**. **Never was living beauty so enchanting, as a dying Saviour!**
    - a) **Love Ignites Love!**
- K. **Very End: Fire** spreads itself w/o depleting itself. **Go on doing what is right at all costs; it will stir others to deeds of heroic zeal! Be a Rizpah.**