**The Righteous King**

**2 Samuel 4:1-12**

# Introduction

[Get attention]

 "Everybody wants to be somebody," was a famous quote by George Foreman, a two-time

world heavyweight champion professional boxer. Who can disagree with such a brilliant quote? No one is willing to be a “nobody.” We desire that our lives count for some significance in this world. Regardless of our culture, upbringing, education level, or status in this world, we desire and intentionally pursue success in this life. This phenomenon is not alien to the Christian world. As a minister of God, we want our ministry to be impactful, effective, and drawing significant numbers of followers of Christ.

[Raise need]

You will be wondering, is it wrong to pursue success? Certainly not, but this is an area in which many will go astray and eventually losing our faith if we are not careful about it. Instead of loving people, we use them as a springboard to pursue success in life. We see this every day in our workplace or even in our ministry. We see our colleagues, friends, or even ourselves manipulating those who are emotionally weaker. Some may even go to the extent of leveraging on someone's misfortune, especially those whom they do not like. Integrity is the most needed leadership quality people are looking for in our leaders today, but very few have it.

[Introduce subject]

The text we are going to look at today will show us *how you can please God with integrity in all you do.*

[Provide background]

During the time of King David, Israel was divided into two kingdoms, namely the Northern and Southern kingdom. These two kingdoms were at odds with each other. They fought a fierce battle in Gibeon. But the house of David grew strong, while the house of Saul became weaker. It is natural to think that king David would treat the household of Saul as an enemy. Thus bringing the head of the enemy to king David would gain favor from him. Recab and Rimmon did what they thought will please king David by killing Ish-Bosheth, the son of Saul. The demise of Ish-Bosheth would enhance the political power of King David to consolidate both the Northern and Southern kingdom to be under his rule. On the contrary, their deed caused great displeasure to king David.

 [Preview main idea]

We shall learn from the passage today, how King David acted with integrity by trusting God – not man – to deliver him from all threats. *(CPS)*

[Announce text]

Turn to Old Testament book 2 Samuel, chapter 4 read from verses 1 to 12.

[Transition to MP]

(From this passage we can learn FOUR (4) lessons ***how to act with integrity in dealing with those who oppose us***. Here is the first way to act with integrity…)

## **Do not rejoice over the misfortune of your enemy.**

* 1. **The demise of Abner significantly weakened Ish-Bosheth's kingdom.**

Who was Abner? He was the commander of Saul's army, stated in 1 Sam 14:50. And Abner made Ish-Bosheth the king of Israel in 1 Sam 2:8-9. He fought a fierce battle in Gibeon against the army of King David, but he lost the battle. As he fled Gibeon, he encountered Asahel, the brother of Joab, who fought, and he killed Asahel. This would be his first mistake that led to his death.

The second mistake was he took Rizpah, the concubine of Saul as his wife. Ish-Bosheth rebuked Abner. Abner was furious over this incident and sided with King David, and tried to make David the king of Israel. King David received Abner’s visit with a feast, King David was pleased with Abner’s proposal and sent him away in peace. But Joab found out about this, he chased after Abner, and he took revenge for the killing of his brother Asahel by murdering Abner. King David distanced himself from the murder, saying, "I and my kingdom are forever guiltless before the LORD for the blood of Abner, the son of Ner. May it fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father's house" (1 Sam 3:28-29).

Now Abner, the chief commander and a kingmaker of Israel, was dead, and this further weakened the political foundation of Israel against the Southern Kingdom.

* 1. **Ish-Bosheth and Israel were fearful and dismayed by the news.**

This news has a devastating effect on Israel and Ish-Bosheth. They were dismayed according to the Scripture. Why so? Because the demise of Abner subjected them to a vulnerable position from a political standpoint. For Ish-Bosheth, this could be translated to the loss of political support within Israel.

But what was the attitude of King David towards the demise of Abner and the misfortune of Israel? Did King David rejoice over this news since it was advantageous to him? In 2 Sam 3:33, it said King David lamented and fasted for Abner. And the people took notice of it, and it pleased all the people. This is the position King David took towards the demise of Abner, it pleased the people, and it brought honor to God.

(What do we do if misfortune befalls our enemy? Would we lament for them as King David did or would we leverage it? This leads us to the second way to act with integrity…)

## **Please God by not leveraging on the misfortune of others.**

* 1. **Recab and Rimmon took advantage of the situation and murdered Ish-Bosheth.**

An opportunist is a person who takes advantage of the opportunity as and when they arise, regardless of planning or principle. Recab and Rimmon were opportunists who took advantage of the situation and leveraged on the misfortune of Ish-Bosheth. They murdered Ish-Bosheth in broad daylight at his home. And in a hurry, they brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to King David.

* 1. **They believed King David would handsomely reward their deed.**

They thought by bringing the head of the enemy of King David to the king would please the king. And they were expecting a handsome reward for their deed, but King David was not pleased at all with what they have done. What a miscalculation!

What went wrong? Recab and Rimmon failed because they were ignorant of the fact that such an incident had happened before in King David’s court. In the case of Saul, when an Amalekite killed Saul and thought that such an act would please King David, and brought Saul's head to David with an expectation to be rewarded. Again King David was not happy at all with his act.

Recab, Rimmon, and the Amalekite all shared the same blind spot: they were ignorant of that King David did not have a habit of leverage on the misfortune of others. King David knew with certainty to leverage on the misfortune of others was a despicable act before the LORD.

You and I also should not follow the steps of these wicked men, although the pursuit of success is a fundamental of human desire, but you should not use ways that will tarnish your testimony as a Christian. Instead, you should seek to please God, and not leverage on the misfortune of others, but show mercy.

(What should we do if we want to live a blessed and fruitful life? We need to pursue a third way to act with integrity…)

## **Please God by trusting God for deliverance**

* 1. **Your deliverance from adversary comes from God, not a wicked man.**

What surprised me was the reason given by King David why he was upset with the act of Recab and Rimmon. The king regarded their act as usurping God’s deliverance power in his life. King David recognized all deliverance comes from God. He did not need the help of man, what more the help of wicked man to deliver him from any adversaries.

[ILL] Once a customer handed me a quotation from my business competitor. My customer wanted me to review their quote and the quality of work rendered to them. In honesty, I was tempted to say, "Oh, these works are shabby, and I can do it better at a lower price!" because I needed the business. In a split second, I was reminded that I am a Christian. My deliverances, be it financial or other areas of my life, come from God. If I trust God, then I should not leverage the situation to my advantage but hold on to my conviction and integrity as a Christian. My reply was, "They quoted you according to the market price, and their quality of work is of good quality." We should not leverage on the vulnerability of others, but trust God that He will provide for all our needs.

Come to this area, you and I will keep failing because we find it difficult to trust God for our deliverance. We prefer to trust the tangible means and predictable solution in our lives. And we end up compromising our Christian integrity.

* 1. **Integrity means you should not reward wickedness.**

Apart from not resorting to wicked ways, you also need to refrain from rewarding wickedness even though the outcome may be favorable to your advantages. You may ask, "When do I ever reward wickedness?" Well, it is when you withhold your condemnation when you see an act of wickedness committed against an innocent. In this way, you are rewarding wickedness because you let the wicked go free without any consequences or reprimands.

* 1. **The wicked man killed a righteous man.**

Going back to the narrative, the murder of Ish-Bosheth is like the elephant in the room. A typical example of the wicked man killing a righteous man. What do you expect a king who trusted God for deliverance to do in a situation like this? Should Recab and Rimmon be rewarded? Should they go scot-free? Or should they be punished for their wicked act?

* 1. **The outcome did not match the expected rewards.**

In many instances, we are tempted to resort to unrighteous means to resolve our problem because we expect a disastrous outcome if we were to tell the truth or to act with integrity. Therefore we compromise. But how often when we compromised our integrity, then we found ourselves in the deeper end of the problem? Recab and Rimmon found themselves in the same situation when their expected outcome did not match their expected rewards.

Therefore you need to trust God for deliverance because it pleases God when you believe in Him. Let God determined the outcome of our situation instead of manipulating the parameters to manufactured the result you desired.

(What happens when the wicked miscalculate their wicked ways? This leads us to the fourth and last way to act with integrity…)

## **Please God by returning justice to the unjust.**

* 1. **The wicked will receive the judgment in full.**

The final verdict is here. King David ordered the killers to be put to death. He said to cut off their hands and feet and hang their bodies beside the pool at Hebron (2 Sam 4:12). It wasn’t a pleasant end for Recab and Rimmon; their punishment was a public display for all the people in Israel. A sober lesson needs to be learned for you and me. Judgment will follow if we act in wicked ways for whatever justifiable reasons that we might think of.

* 1. **The righteous will give honor to whom honor is due.**

Apart from pronouncing judgment on Ish-Bosheth’s murderers, King David provided a proper burial to Ish-Bosheth in the tomb of Abner at Hebron. King David gave honor to whom honor was due.

These acts of King David pleased all the tribes of Israel. As a result, all the elders of Israel submitted to the leadership of King David and anointed David king over Israel (2 Sam 5:1-3).

(What can we learn from this passage? We have seen how to act with integrity in dealing with those who oppose us.)

## **Conclusion**

* + 1. We need to mimic King David in believing it is God (The Righteous King)– not wicked men - that will deliver us from all adversity (MI).
		2. Don’t trust in your wicked ways to pursue success, but act with integrity that pleases God (MI restated). Let us learn to fear God more than we fear failure in life.
		3. You are most vulnerable when you feel God does not care, or you become impatient to wait for God's deliverance. It is at this point you will be tempted to use your own way or even unrighteous way to pursue your life’s goal.
		4. How have you been tempted in any way to compromise your integrity to climb the corporate ladder? Then from now on, let us not trade our integrity in pursuit of success. Have you ever manipulated the weak in your congregation to strengthen their support on your ministry? Then you should stop doing it now. Do not exploit their vulnerability for your gain. Did you speak up when unjust statements are hurled on the people that you don't like? Let us pick up our courageous heart to act on any form of injustice even though it is directed to people that we don't like.
		5. Therefore let us learn to trust God and learn to be patient to wait upon the Lord. As the Scriptures said, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Gal 6:9).