

Th224 Sin and Atonement: The Restoration of Relationship

Lesson Th224-18 God's Law: Search for Restoration

Broken relationships are difficult to repair. A man was caught in adultery. His wife was deeply hurt and offended. The husband had broken his wedding vows of remaining faithful to her. The husband apologized and said he would be faithful from that day forward, but the wife no longer trusted him. He had broken his vows once, what would stop him from doing it again? Sometimes broken relationships can never be restored to their original state.

King David experienced broken relationship in his own family. Now David had many wives who gave him 19 sons and at least one daughter. His oldest son was named Amnon, who was born to Ahinoam. As the eldest he was the heir to the throne and held a special relationship with David. Now David's third son, Absalom, was born to Maacah, the daughter of the king of Geshur. Absalom was incredibly handsome, with long beautiful hair. Not only was he handsome, he was well liked by the people of Jerusalem. Tamar was his beautiful sister.

You can imagine how complicated it must have been in David's royal palace. He had many wives and concubines living there, along with all of their children. Amnon strolled through the halls of his father's palace, secure in his position as the heir to the throne. He had grown into somewhat of a spoiled young man, used to getting what he wanted. Amnon watched his half sister Tamar grow up into a beautiful young woman. Eventually he no longer looked upon her as a sister, but rather as an object of his lust. Amnon had a cousin, who noticed that Amnon was distracted and not happy. "What is wrong, Amnon?" Jonadab asked.

"I am in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." Amnon said. Jonadab thought about this and developed a plan. Amnon went to his room and climbed into bed pretending to be ill. King David heard that his eldest son was ill and went to visit him. "I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand," he told his father. So, David sent for Tamar and instructed her to prepare some food for Amnon (2Sam 13:1-7).

Tamar did just as she was instructed. But Amnon refused to eat. "Everyone get out of my room," Amnon ordered. Once they were alone, he said, "Tamar, bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand." But when Tamar came near his bed, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister."

"No, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing. What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you." But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!" Then Tamar fled in disgrace. Soon Absalom, her

brother, heard what had happened. When King David heard about it, he was furious, but did nothing to discipline Amnon (2Sam 13:9-21).

Two years later Absalom threw a feast to celebrate the shearing of his sheep in the city of Baal Hazor. He invited all of his brothers and King David. The king decided not to attend, but sent Amnon and all of the brothers. During the feast, when Amnon became drunk, Absalom's men fell upon him and killed him. All of the other sons of David fled, returning home to Jerusalem. But Absalom, fearing his father, fled to the city of his mother's father, the king of Geshur, where he would remain for three years.

Now King David mourned for his eldest son, Amnon. But he also grieved that he had lost his handsome son, Absalom. Their relationship was broken and the king did not know how to restore it. Joab, the general of David's armies, watched the king mourn for the loss of his son Absalom. He devised a plan to try to restore the king's relationship with his son. He hired a wise woman from the city of Tekoa. She came before the king as a widow and told a story. She said one of her sons killed his only brother. Now the entire clan she was a part of was going to kill her remaining son, leaving her with no heir.

David listened to her request and promised her and her son protection from retribution. She then turned the story back upon him and said, "If you are willing to protect my son, why have you not brought your own son Absalom home from exile?" David quickly figured out that General Joab was behind this and then sent him to retrieve his son Absalom and bring him home to Jerusalem. This Joab did, returning Absalom to his own house. But the king refused to see his son's face. Their relationship was broken and the king could not find a way to restore Absalom (2Sam 14:1-23).

Eventually David would face his son and forgive him, but the relationship was beyond repair. This would later result in Absalom's leading a revolt and attempting to kill his father and take over the kingdom.

Throughout human history humankind has sought to restore relationship with God. They have sacrificed animals, prayed, and made extreme vows. None of these was able to restore relationship with a perfect God, who could not have close relationship with sinful man. Humankind's guilt is a barrier that they cannot cross to reach God.

Humankind eventually lost sight of the God who had created them. But still humans craved relationship with a god. They then set out to create their own. They invented and shaped their own gods and made up rules of obedience and sacrifice to placate their own guilt. This led to extremes, including human sacrifice. But all of their efforts were in vain, as their gods were false gods, often inhabited by demonic forces. Their efforts left them empty and dissatisfied. Only the true God could fill the empty void in their hearts.

This lesson is **important** because it shows the extremes that people will go to in order to restore broken relationships.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that there is nothing that people can do to restore their relationship with God. Mankind is still under the condemnation of the guilt of their sin.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did Amnon do to his half sister Tamar? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said that Amnon raped his half sister, you are correct.

2. Who took revenge on Amnon for the rape of Tamar? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said, “Absalom, Tamar’s brother, ordered his men to kill Amnon,” you are correct.

3. What is it that separates humankind from relationship with God? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said that guilt and condemnation of sin separates humankind from God, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to watch it at least three more times until you can tell the story of Amnon and Tamar in your own words. Then find a few friends and tell them this story. Discuss with them the consequences of broken relationships and how they are so difficult to restore. Pray together to ask the Holy Spirit to help you to find ways to restore such relations in your lives.