

Do Not Do This Outrageous Thing  
2 Samuel 13  
September 10, 2023  
Rev. Dave Dorst  
CenterPoint Church

## Introduction

Families are supposed to be tight-knit groups, with love and support flowing between its members, a safe haven from the outside world. But we all know that's not always the case, either with problems between children and their parents or with friction between siblings. One complicating factor between brothers and sisters can be when the relationship is of half-siblings, those who only share one parent, particularly when they're brought up in the same house. Sometimes those relationships can flourish, other times they can struggle. Consider several perspectives of people that I found online:

"I only have half siblings and I didn't grow up with them... I never called them half siblings but the older I get the more I realize that because we weren't full blooded and didn't grow up together, I don't have a relationship with them. They have a relationship with each other so I'm the odd ball with no bond with anyone. It really hurts. I would rather just be an only child with no siblings at all."

"I'm an only child, with seven half siblings. One family is kind and loving, the other, highly competitive, controlling, manipulative, and so forth. It really depends on the tone set by the parents, in my opinion. I've seen this with other families, as well. If a family tolerates abrasive behavior and bullying, then, that's what will continue. If a family is taught to behave with love and care, then, that is what will dominate."

"I personally think the bittersweet feeling of how your half siblings remind you of your now 'broken' family is my biggest challenge... I don't blame my half siblings but at the same time, I don't bother with any of them... I sometimes have a bittersweet feeling of how they reminded me of how messy the divorce and the times finding out they exist were."<sup>1</sup>

We see some of the troubling relationships of half-siblings in history and literature: Queen Mary I of England, "Bloody Mary," imprisoned her half-sister, Elizabeth, in the Tower of London. In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the character Edmund makes up lies about his half-brother, Edgar, which gets him condemned by their father. In Genesis, Jacob's favorite son, Joseph, was thrown into a pit, then sold into slavery by his half-brothers. With siblings like these, who needs enemies, right?

Today's passage is another Biblical story of friction and dysfunction among half-siblings. It happened in the royal family in ancient Israel where the king had many wives, and the children of those multiple marriages all lived in close proximity to one another in the capital city of Jerusalem. As most children do, they imitated their father in both the good and the bad. The incidents in this chapter are a bombshell that explodes in David's life and reign, and he'll be dealing with the shrapnel for a long time. The first nineteen verses tell the wicked story of

### **I. The Rape of Tamar: Lust Turned Into Disgust (vv. 1-19)**

<sup>1</sup> Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her. <sup>2</sup> And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. <sup>3</sup> But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother. And Jonadab was a very

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-biggest-challenges-about-having-a-half-brother-or-sister-that-may-differ-from-a-full-sibling?share=1>

crafty man. <sup>4</sup> And he said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." <sup>5</sup> Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.'" <sup>6</sup> So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand." <sup>7</sup> Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him." <sup>8</sup> So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes. <sup>9</sup> And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, "Send out everyone from me." So everyone went out from him. <sup>10</sup> Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. <sup>11</sup> But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." <sup>12</sup> She answered him, "No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. <sup>13</sup> As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you." <sup>14</sup> But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her. <sup>15</sup> Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Get up! Go!" <sup>16</sup> But she said to him, "No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me." But he would not listen to her. <sup>17</sup> He called the young man who served him and said, "Put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her." <sup>18</sup> Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves, for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed. So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. <sup>19</sup> And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

#### A couple of notes:

- There was an earlier Tamar in the Bible, we can't confuse the two women. In Genesis 38, Tamar was married to Er, whose father was Judah. When her husband died, she didn't have any children and Judah, her father-in-law, would not marry her off to anyone. So in her desperation, she disguised herself as a prostitute and seduced her father-in-law. It's a sordid, scandalous account, and it's also part of David's ancestry (and of Jesus'). It's possible that David named his daughter Tamar after the Tamar in Genesis. If so, it's a very unfortunate linkage.
- Amnon was David's oldest son, so at this point in time, he was the most likely to become king. So in addition to this story being told to explain how David's house was troubled in the aftermath of his great scandal, it's also the story of why Amnon and Absalom don't become king after David's death, making way for Solomon's kingship.

Amnon and Tamar are half-siblings, both children of David but of different mothers. The Mosaic law (God's instructions to His covenant people, Israel) had established centuries before David's time that sexual relations between siblings was forbidden. Leviticus 18:9: "*You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home.*" Verse 1 says that Amnon "loved" his half-sister, but what we see here is not love but selfish lust. He was so obsessed with her that it made him ill. His cousin, Jonadab, could tell just by looking at him that something was wrong with him. So Amnon explained how he "loved" his half-sister, and rather than rebuking him and reminding him that acting on this desire would be very destructive, Jonadab did the opposite. Verse 3 says that he was a "crafty man," and he devised a plan so that Amnon could get Tamar alone to do with her as he wished. Amnon

immediately put the plan to work, making both his father and his sister think that he had no wicked motives in having Tamar make food for him alone in his room.

Rape is a vile, wicked thing and incest is a vile, wicked thing. Put them together and you can understand why Tamar pleaded with her half-brother: *“No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing.”*<sup>13</sup> *As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel.”* She was trying to convince him with whatever bit of logic and desperation she could as she was being forced into his bed. Her final sentence was perhaps the most disturbing: *“Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.”* Was this true? Would David allow his children to marry one another despite the prohibition in the law of Moses? I personally don’t think so, so either Tamar misunderstood or mischaracterized her father, depending on whether you think that she is grasping at whatever she can to get her brother away from her, or whether she sincerely thinks this would be a solution. If you believe that marriage between them was a possibility, then this *“thing is not done in Israel”* only refers to rape; but I think it refers to incest.

Nothing that Tamar pleaded with Amnon was stronger than his selfish lust, and so he ignored her and violated her. After which, his self-proclaimed “love” turned suddenly to hatred – or, as Jonathan Kirsch said, “his lust turned into disgust... ‘Put out this woman’ is how Amnon’s words are rendered in standard English translations, but the original Hebrew text reveals that Amnon no longer regarded his half-sister as a human being: ‘Put out this thing’ is the literal translation of his words.”<sup>2</sup> His hatred for her was stronger than his former “love” and he had his servants forcibly remove her from the room, bolting the door behind her.

The last verse says that Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her robe. Why? Because she was so upset about being raped? That’s part of it, but additionally, in that culture she would now never be acceptable to a husband, and her life would never consist of marriage or children. She would live, the next verse tells us, as a *“desolate woman in her brother Absalom’s house.”* Amnon has effectively “ruined” her life, both in the scars she now bore and the memories that would haunt her, but also the fact that this scandal would unfairly stigmatize her when she had done nothing wrong. It’s why she pleaded, *“this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me.”*

I originally had this section near the end of the sermon, but I moved it up here because I feel that there is the distinct possibility that someone hearing this sermon may not hear the rest of the sermon because it’s hitting a little too close to home. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center says that 1 in 5 women have experienced at least attempted rape in their lifetime, and a third of those victims experienced it between the ages of 11 and 17. 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of sexual violence directed at them, with a quarter of those occurring during their teen years. 81% of women and 43% of men report experiencing some form of sexual harassment or assault in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup> There are a whole lot more statistics, but the point is that it’s very common, and it would be naive of us to believe that someone here hasn’t experienced sexual violence, or possibly committed it. Some people get help immediately and I hope that’s the case. But a lot of victims of sexual violence don’t tell anyone out of fear, shame, or the pain that it causes to think and talk about it. But something that traumatic does not just go away. It needs to be shared, cried through, and processed. I don’t want to move on in this sermon without you hearing me say very clearly that God loves you no matter what your sexual history has been. Victims of sexual abuse are not “damaged

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<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Kirsch, *King David: The Real Life of the Man Who Ruled Israel* (New York: Ballantine, 2001), p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics>

goods” to Him. And we want you to get counseling or share your experience with someone who will walk through that with you. I am not a licensed counselor, but I am available for any of the men who would like to talk. Betsy Chesnutt is a licensed counselor who said she’s available for any of the women who would like to talk. You can contact us privately; her information is on the website.

Back to the text: Would anyone hold Amnon responsible? It would take some time, but eventually someone would avenge this atrocity:

## **II. The Death of Amnon: Killing the Brother From Another Mother (vv. 20-29)**

*<sup>20</sup> And her brother Absalom said to her, “Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother; do not take this to heart.” So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom’s house. <sup>21</sup> When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. <sup>22</sup> But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had violated his sister Tamar. <sup>23</sup> After two full years Absalom had sheepshearers at Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king’s sons. <sup>24</sup> And Absalom came to the king and said, “Behold, your servant has sheepshearers. Please let the king and his servants go with your servant.” <sup>25</sup> But the king said to Absalom, “No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you.” He pressed him, but he would not go but gave him his blessing. <sup>26</sup> Then Absalom said, “If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us.” And the king said to him, “Why should he go with you?” <sup>27</sup> But Absalom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the king’s sons go with him. <sup>28</sup> Then Absalom commanded his servants, “Mark when Amnon’s heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, ‘Strike Amnon,’ then kill him. Do not fear; have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant.” <sup>29</sup> So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king’s sons arose, and each mounted his mule and fled.*

Tamar went straight to her brother Absalom’s house where he asked, “*Has Amnon your brother been with you?*” As John Woodhouse notes, “It speaks volumes about Amnon’s reputation that Absalom immediately suspected that he had raped his sister.”<sup>4</sup> He told her not to take what happened to heart, which is, of course, impossible. What I think he meant was that he would take it to heart on her account. Both Absalom and his father, David, were angry about what happened, but the text says that Absalom hated Amnon because of it. And it doesn’t mention that David did a single thing about it. So, reading between the lines, Absalom waited for two full years to avenge his sister’s assault because he was waiting to see if his father would do anything about it. David’s passivity, his failure to discipline or hold Amnon accountable for his crime actually helped lead to his death.

Absalom finally ran out of patience and invited Amnon to the celebration surrounding the sheepshearing, setting the trap where he would end his life. In verse 27, there is a sense that David unknowingly sent Amnon to his death in the same way that he unwittingly sent Tamar to be raped back in verse 7. He thought that he was just sending his daughter to make a meal for his son, but the son had devious plans. Here he was just sending his son to a meal prepared by his other son, but his younger son had revenge on his mind. Several commentators think that David suspected that both of his sons had evil plans but was either naïve or partly complicit in going along with them; but this is to think the absolute worst of David.

The fallout from this murder led to

## **III. The Exile of Absalom: One Son Dead, One Son Fled (vv. 30-39)**

*<sup>30</sup> While they were on the way, news came to David, “Absalom has struck down all the king’s sons, and not one of them is left.” <sup>31</sup> Then the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the earth. And all his*

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<sup>4</sup> John Woodhouse, *2 Samuel: Your Kingdom Come* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), p. 346.

servants who were standing by tore their garments. <sup>32</sup> But Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day he violated his sister Tamar. <sup>33</sup> Now therefore let not my lord the king so take it to heart as to suppose that all the king's sons are dead, for Amnon alone is dead." <sup>34</sup> But Absalom fled. And the young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, many people were coming from the road behind him by the side of the mountain. <sup>35</sup> And Jonadab said to the king, "Behold, the king's sons have come; as your servant said, so it has come about." <sup>36</sup> And as soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came and lifted up their voice and wept. And the king also and all his servants wept very bitterly. <sup>37</sup> But Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son day after day. <sup>38</sup> So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. <sup>39</sup> And the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom, because he was comforted about Amnon, since he was dead.

In the chaotic aftermath of Absalom's servants stabbing Amnon, a report somehow got back to David that Absalom had killed all of his sons. David tore his garments at the mistaken report, a parallel to Tamar's tearing her robes after her rape; both expressions of outrage and grief. Tamar had no reason to blame herself, David did. It is at least touching that David wept as strongly for one of his son's deaths (verses 36-37) as he had been when he thought that they had all been killed (verse 30). Apparently, Absalom had already thought through his escape, and hid out in Geshur for the next three years. Geshur was northeast of Israel, it's like saying someone fled our state and hid out in Jersey, and it's where his mother was from and his grandfather was the king. How would David deal with this turn of events and what happened at the end of those three years? You'll have to stay tuned for the next sermon on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Conclusion

If you were here last week, or have recently read 2 Samuel chapter 12, you remember that one of the punishments that God pronounced to David as a result of his sin against Bathsheba and Uriah was: "*Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house*" (2 Samuel 12:10). The chickens have come home to roost in this chapter, as the saying goes. David's sins have come back to haunt him. Amnon the prince felt so entitled when he desired a beautiful woman that, even though it was forbidden, he just took her and raped her. Wherever did he learn that if you're royalty you can take any woman you want? And then Absalom lashed out at Amnon and killed him. Wherever did he learn that the way you deal with a gross crime is to kill someone?<sup>5</sup> A singer-songwriter named Pierce Pettis has a song called "Absalom, Absalom" that has the following verse from David's POV:

"You were the laughing boy who bounced upon my knee / You learned to play the harp and use the shepherd's sling / Always watching, my impressionable son / Oh Absalom, what have I done? / You were watching when I took a good man's wife / And gave the orders for his murder, just to cover up the crime / All the vanity, cruel arrogance, and greed / Oh Absalom, you learned it all from me."

Now parents, please don't take this to mean that you are responsible for every single bad thing that your child does. What an incredible weight of guilt you would take on if every single thing was your fault. Your children grow up and make their own choices. You'll see them imitate you in both good and bad ways. And values are both taught and caught in the home, right? You can teach them verbally, but regardless of what you say, your kids "catch" what your values are by watching you, even if they don't line up with what you say. For example, you can tell your kids that reading is

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Ray Cortese's sermon "David & Bathsheba" from 10/27/13, found at sevenrivers.org.

important, but if they only ever see you watching TV or YouTube, they'll know it's not really that important. You can tell your kids to value their faith, but if they never see you praying or reading the Bible on your own, they'll know it's not actually valuable to you. Kids have strong internal "lie detectors" and know when a parent's walk does not match the talk. Sometimes hiding your sins and faults is worse because they often find out anyways, and then they learn that the way you deal with guilt or shame is to cover them up. Your children need to see you be real, admit your faults (when appropriate), repent to the Lord, ask their forgiveness when necessary, and extend forgiveness.

Having said that, though, I do want to challenge what can be one of our biggest areas of sin as parents: passivity, a refusal to guide and shepherd our children. Fathers, particularly, I challenge you because we see that it's David's passivity that made this situation with his children worse. One commentary noted that,

"The greatest temptation men face... is not to outright wickedness but to the smoother – and equally destructive – path of apathy and inaction. When we look around at the family situation in the United States today, we are grieved by the failure of fathers to fulfill the role God has given them. In some instances this manifests in outright abuse. But far more often it manifests in absent dads, men who would rather know what is happening on ESPN than in the lives of their son and daughters. Were most of the men in our churches to show the same level of apathy in their jobs as they do in their home lives, they would have been fired long ago."<sup>6</sup>

Ouch, that's convicting to me, especially on the first day of the football season!

The flip side of that parenting challenge is to all of us: regardless of how good or bad your parents were, you need to hear that you are responsible for your actions. You cannot excuse terrible behavior throughout your life by pointing to dad, mom, or both and saying, "It's their fault!" Certainly, you should try to understand how your parents have influenced you, both good and bad. But ultimately, you are responsible to refrain from abusing and hurting others. You will stand before God and answer for your sins, just as Amnon and Absalom were responsible for their crimes.

David's passivity points to something else: the justice of God. Because we can easily feel like Absalom and wonder why our heavenly Father doesn't do anything about the injustice and evil that we see around us. Years can go by and wicked people keep thriving and it seems like the Lord does nothing to intervene. Perhaps, like Absalom, we think we have to take vengeance into our own hands if it's ever going to happen. But that would be a mistake. Absalom should have pressed the case to his father, then to the elders of Israel if David would not have done anything. And in the same way, we should pursue justice and make sure that things like sexual assaults and violence get reported and that the guilty are dealt with by the appropriate authority. But making our own plans for vengeance can never honor God. Romans 12:19: "*Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'*" If we find ourselves in Tamar's or Absalom's shoes, we can know that those who have wronged us will someday pay fully.

God will make all things right in the end, justice will be served, and the guilty will be punished. But the great hope of the Gospel is that for those who repent of their sins and seek the Lord's forgiveness, justice has already been satisfied. Just as God provided animals to be sacrificed to atone for the sins of His people Israel in the Old Testament, so God has provided a spotless lamb for His people to be atoned for in the New Testament, in the New Covenant. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, who was fully God and fully Man, was given up as a sacrifice on the cross to atone for our sins.

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<sup>6</sup> Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel* (Nashville: Holman, 2016), p. 226.

1 Peter 1:18-19: *“you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”*

No matter how evil our sins are, there is forgiveness and restoration. As we are seeing in the life of David, there are still consequences when we sin, but we can have our guilt and spiritual condemnation dealt with by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. He died in our place on the cross, giving up His life and paying the penalty that God requires for our sins. And all those who have experienced the grace and freedom of the cross said, “Amen.”

Benediction - Philemon 6, 25 - *“I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”*