

Let the Righteous Smite me

**Additional contributions to supplement Brother Ken's Introduction
Psalms 141:5**

Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

The prefix of the Psalm indicates that the author is David the man after God's own heart, the anointed King of Israel. He knew what he was talking about when acknowledging the huge benefits of being reproved by a righteous man. He was reproved on many occasions. There are not many examples in recorded history of any nation of an all-powerful king where the history of the nation records the instances the times their much-loved king is scolded and reproved! It shows the refreshing honesty of the word of God, and the authenticity of the record.

David was reproved by his brothers when going up to the battle against the Philistines in 1 Samuel 17:28 for being nosy. He was reproved by Abigail in 1 Samuel 25:25 for being hasty. He was reproved by Joab in 2 Samuel 19:5, for being over emotional, and again in 2 Samuel 24:3 for numbering the people. He was reproved by Joab for the exile of his son 2 Samuel 14:22, he was cursed by Shimei for being a man of blood in 2 Samuel 16:7 and in 2 Samuel 12, he was severely rebuked by Nathan the prophet for adultery and murder.

In Proverbs 29:1 *He, that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* In David's case though he was a flawed man, he was humble, and kept his heart soft through prayer and study of the law, he did not harden his neck, but took reproof even from wicked men!!

It is possible to see an insight into his thinking in his response to Abigail when she 'reproved' him, for hasty and bad tempered response to provocation.

1 Samuel 25:31-34

... And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. ...

We can see that David sees the hand of God in this, that Abigail is a messenger, and that he sees her advice as being a Message from God. That is the spirit of humility, but also spiritual intelligence. The reproof saved him from certain sins which would follow, from a total chaos and revolt which would ensue, damage to his reputation, leadership, and from undermining the Law of God – just a few quiet timely words, was all it took. The transformation in David's mood was swift and obvious, as he was brought up with a start. It was like a short sharp shock – a slap that a rude naughty boy at school once would get (before woke liberal social engineers turned schools into discipline free zones). The natural reaction is to transfer some of the agitation and irritation onto the poor messenger, who is trying to help, but David was not like that.

Another example is of course when David lost his way, and all self-control, when there was not anyone there to say Isaiah 30:21. *This is the way, walk ye in it...* because they were all away fighting the enemies of Israel, and David thought he deserved a holiday! He spiralled downwards in more destructive iniquity, seemingly oblivious to the pain and harm he was causing others. Instead of a short sharp shock, he could well have been slain out of hand. Instead a righteous man was sent to him, - which would have taken some courage! Nathan was given a very hard-hitting message to deliver, and he did not shrink from it.

2 Samuel 12:7-13 *And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. The impact this would have had, when David realised that he man he so readily condemned to death was himself, would have been devastating. He had no choice but to listen to the rest of the message: Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun....*

It was the prerogative and Grace of God to forgive David, as He, and only He knows the hearts of all men. David looking back at that moment knew it was his lowest point, and that verbal delivery was a blow which saved his life. *Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.* David may have been anointed with oil to be king. But the anointing to his appointment to eternal life was at that moment. It was an excellent oil, at a crucial time, at that vital moment which made him change direction.

(It reminds us a little of the alabaster box, of expensive excellent oil, spikenard, used by the unnamed woman, which was poured upon the head of the Lord Jesus (Matt26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9,) which she

poured upon his head, two days before the Passover, in the same way oil was poured upon the chosen Passover Lamb to declare it free of blemishes, two days before Passover, she a righteous woman knew Jesus to be the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world, and was thus declaring him to be The Man. But Jesus took it as a blessing, she hath done this for my burial. He knew, that she knew. Although righteous she was not reproving Jesus, but he reproved his disciples for complaining of the waste.)

There are other examples of righteous men being sent to reprove others, and the outcome is not always favourable! In 2 Chronicles 16:7-10 Hanani the seer was sent to Asa king of Judah, to rebuke him *Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.*

It is easy to get annoyed when we are warned, but it is a common tendency. It does not actually hurt when the righteous reproves, all it hurts is the pride. And that is of no account. Peter showed no signs of hurt pride, when Jesus said to him Get behind me Satan. Nor when he saw Jesus looking at him, when he had denied him three times. How that look would have pierced him through. He wept bitterly. Yet even just a look, it can make the difference, and can be enough, to stimulate the good conscience in someone. Peter learned so much from the Master, so that he could take reproof even in public, when he was held in high reputation, and he did not mind in the least, but showed grace and accepted the advice in Galatians 2:11-14.

Proverbs 9:8-9 *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.* It is easy to turn to someone when they may give us advice or a simple few words of guidance and if necessary rebuke – excuse me,

who do you think you are telling me what to do, or who are you to judge me, we can get all high and mighty and indignant, but, really it does not matter, because as the saying goes, *if the cap fits wear it*, if it doesn't, then there is no point in getting all excited, but we do, because our pride or feelings get hurt. But often upon reflection, even guidance which may be misguided but which is given in the right spirit can be helpful, can be useful to call upon later, or in fact might be the very solution which we have been choosing to ignore.

Proverbs 27:5-6 *Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.* This then reveals the true sentiment behind reproof, it is not one-up-man-ship, but the sign that someone cares, it is the voice of an angel, a Messenger, what we do with the message is up to us. It may be a message from the Lord himself using Providence to give us a short sharp shock. Revelation 3:19: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*