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# The Messenger



*"... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15*

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Listen to PROVE ALL THINGS on 730 AM WKRE, Sunday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30

## Absalom, My Son

*by Archie E. Proctor*

*And David the king was much moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! My son, my Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! (II Samuel 18:33)*

Nothing in this world can tear at the heart of a parent who is a faithful Christian more than the spiritual death of a child. It is even more tragic when that child trapped in sin is caught into eternity by death in that condition. All the years of careful, patient teaching, nurturing in the Lord, the many times that precious soul was taken to the assembly of the church to hear the gospel preached and the Bible taught seem to be as nothing. Those patient, faithful lives of mother and father lived as best as they could, giving an example of how one should be a Christian, seem to have no meaning or effect.

David knew that feeling many times in his life. The death of Absalom was one occasion. Going up to that upper chamber, he must have recalled the prophet's words; *"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 neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun."* This was spoken after he had confessed to the sin of adultery with Bathsheba.

Now the consequences of that awful sin had come fully home. The death of an infant son, the murder of his son Amnon by Absalom, and finally, the slaying of Absalom by his general, Joab, all resulted as a consequence of his fall into sin.

Too often, however, parents of wayward children have done nothing to bring about such loss of a child, either in sinning themselves or failing properly to teach the child how he should live his life. Yet, many times, the guilt that David felt seems to come crashing down on the shoulders of godly parents who have seen that child go astray. To add to the burden, it seems Christians and friends, who should know better, assume that it must have been some failure of character or teaching that let the child go off, and that there surely was something that could have been done if the parents had done this or that.

Parents in this situation spend many hours in fervent prayer asking for strength, help, and the opportunity to say or do that one more thing that might reach the child before it is eternally too late. Night after night, sleep fades as the parents play the "what if" game in their minds. (What if I did or said this or that instead of what I did say.) Tears are shed without measure in regret and remorse. The sinning child can never know the burden he places on the heart of that loving mother and father by his actions.

What words of comfort can we bring to parents in this condition? First of all, we need to recognize that Proverbs 22:6 is not an absolute. Children can be properly trained and still go astray.

The Bible gives many examples of this. Perhaps the best known is Solomon. He was so faithful in his youth; he asked the Lord for wisdom over wealth or fame or other things. But in his maturity, he let other wives turn his heart away from God.

Faithful Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, yet only one was the son of promise and followed the Lord. Ishmael was never known as a servant of God, and his descendants became the enemies of Israel. Lot is called a righteous and vexed man, yet he lost all of his household to sin, even though he kept himself to serve the Lord. We need to realize that all men must stand before God and make their choice to obey him. Being raised in the Lord's church is a tremendous advantage, but only if the opportunity is used and not wasted. Many times the most faithful leaders, preachers and Bible teachers are men and women who do not learn of the gospel and its power until well into their adult lives. Often they must obey the gospel under some personal sacrifice, losing contact with friends and family. Others, with the advantage of being raised by godly parents, may never come to their full potential, but drift along year after year, having no real root and becoming easy prey for the first false teacher to come along. This is the reason good and faithful congregations go off into error over the period of a generation.

When parents have a child gone into error, rather than waste effort and time in regret, they should ask themselves the following questions:

1. Did he understand the terms of the gospel while he was under our care?
2. Was he exposed to sound gospel preaching, or did he get "sermonettes" while he was under our care?
3. Did we have caring thoughtful Bible study at home on a regular basis while he was under our care?
4. Was he disciplined when it was needful?
5. Regardless of how much he did or did not want to come, did I insist on his attendance at every service of the Lord's church?
6. Did I attend myself at all times possible?
7. If the elders applied discipline to the case of my child's unfaithfulness, did I approve and do what I could to reinforce the lesson in the child's mind? Did the child require such discipline?
8. Do I continue to try to talk to my child about his unfaithfulness, and continue to encourage him to serve the Lord, and pray for him always?

Parents who can answer in the affirmative to these questions may take some comfort in knowing that they did all that was possible to teach this child, and must accept the fact that when he is an adult, he must stand before God and give account of his life. Nothing we do or fail to do at that point will cause him to save or lose his soul; it is between him and his God.

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## **News and Notes:**

Reminder: Bible Study – Every Tuesday @ 10 a.m. (Exodus) and @ 7 p.m. (Romans)

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

*"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*  
James 5:16