

Loyalty Tested, part 3

2 Samuel 16:1-4

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 11-3-2013

Introduction

Over the past two weeks we have been looking at various tests of loyalty, and in this chapter we begin to see how true loyalty is obscured and false loyalty is paraded and honored. And it is so effective, that Ziba is able to deceive even a good man like David. We discover later that Ziba is actually a selfish, lying, conniving, grasping, small-hearted man who is parading himself as a generous and loyal patriot. But in this chapter he has the audacity of projecting his own characteristics onto Mephibosheth, and accusing the humble and true Patriot, Mephibosheth, as being disloyal to David and country. Everything seems upside down in the first 19 verses of this chapter.

But this is so true to life, isn't it? The American media portrays tyrants and those who are destroying our country as freedom lovers who really care about the people, and it paints Constitutionalists as selfish and hateful bigots. It's weird. This past week I read a post by someone who said,

“...obama is not just loyal to america. He is loyal to the american people... the loyalty that matters and that we want is not bumper sticker loyalty or flag waiving loyalty. We want loyalty to the well being of the people that make up america....or at least the great majority of them... obama is loyal to me... he is loyal to you he is loyal to the american people.... thats 1 million times better than wearing a flag pin.”¹

Loyalty. What does it mean? That's what we have been trying to examine in this mini-series within the book of Samuel. And in the first nineteen verses of this chapter, who is loyal and who is not loyal was a confusing mess to those who were alive at that time. Now, because we have the Scripture, we can see much more clearly than they did – especially with the hindsight that we have. But I would say that we still need the Scriptures to be able to navigate the accusations and counter-accusations of disloyalty and the claims by dangerous people that they are the most loyal and they have the interests of the people at heart. We need to evaluate current events by the Scripture.

¹ Posted by jesswzmn at <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080524141610AA1LMaB>

Consider the use of the term “loyal” in the following statements that I read this past week: “The members of the Log Cabin Republicans are ‘loyal Republicans.’” Is that true? Are those sodomite activists truly loyal? Here’s another one: “Pro-choice and a loyal Republican, Susan Cullman will attend her party’s national convention.” Or consider this headline: “Muslims are the most loyal American religious group.” “The most loyal” – that’s an interesting claim, and it has been made on the New York Times, newsmax, yahoo news, democrats for progress, Gallup, and other organizations. Back when Elana Kagan was being nominated to the Supreme Court, Republican Lindsey Graham supported her, saying, “She is a loyal American, very patriotic.” Is that true? How would we know? It seems that the word “loyal” means different things to different people. One more example – this one an accusation. In an article titled, “ARE EXTREMIST (TEA PARTY) REPUBLICANS THE ENEMY AND TRAITORS TO AMERICA?,” R. Blackbird said, “(Tea Party) Republicans are selfish, power hungry, hateful of the poor, disloyal to the nation and its people, dishonest, avaricious, scornful of the nation’s history [I just had to laugh out loud at that], the dignity of its institutions, its standards of political morality, and its vision of advancement for all the people.” Wow! It seems that Zibas continue to flourish in our world. And I want to highlight eight characteristics of Ziba’s false loyalty.

I. False loyalty can be generous with other people’s property (v. 1)

The first is that false loyalty can be very generous with other people’s property. And generosity is often seen as an aspect of loyalty, so it makes sense that counterfeit generosity would be present in counterfeit loyalty.

Look at verse 1:

2Sam. 16:1 When David was a little past the top *of the mountain*, there was Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them two hundred *loaves* of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

Wow! That was a welcome sight to David. He had to flee so quickly that he didn’t have the time to be able to bring food with them. They just dropped everything and ran. So Ziba is a real hero. He was bringing well-needed supplies. But here’s a good question: “To whom does the food and donkeys belong?” And does it matter? Ziba implies that they belong to him in this chapter, but in chapter 19 we find the real answer: “They belonged to

Mephibosheth.” It’s easy for Ziba to be generous with someone else’s property. He is giving what is not his own to give.

And this is really at the heart of what is wrong with socialism. Socialism claims to be loyal to the interests of the people while robbing the people through taxes and inflation. And socialists claim to be generous with resources, while rarely sacrificing their own money. It’s almost always the money of others that they are “generous” with. In fact, at its roots Socialism is based on envy and theft not big-heartedness and generosity.

Now that may seem like an audacious claim to make, but let me back it up. When you look at the socialistic leaders around the world who claim to be on the side of the poor, most of them are enormously wealthy, and while they vote to redistribute wealth, they rarely redistribute their own wealth. They are like Ziba. And it is true of the socialists of our own country. You look at people like Joe Biden, Al Gore, and others and you will see that they give very little of their income to charity. From 1998 to 2007 (a nine year span) Biden gave anywhere from a low of 0.06% of his income in one year to 0.31% of his income on a high year. He didn’t even give 1/3 of 1% of his income. Every one of you gives more in a year than Biden did – at least if you are fulfilling your membership vows of tithing to the church. Which I hope you are – that’s what you pledged to do.

There is a book by Arthur C. Brooks called, *Who Really Cares?* that extensively documents that liberals (who have the false reputation of generosity) are typically the stingiest people of all. For example, those who attend church every week give 3.5 times more money (that’s 350% more) than liberal secularists and they donate twice as much time as those liberal secularists. And people might say, “Yeah, yeah! That’s because they are members of a church. Of course they are going to be giving to their church.” But even when giving to church or ministries is excluded, the same still holds true – religious people give far more to conservative secular and political causes than the average liberal secularist does. Liberal generosity is an illusion; it’s a counterfeit, with obviously a few notable exceptions (and I will admit that there are some very, very, generous liberals).

Another organization that has documented the same thing is The Chronicle of Philanthropy. They reported that the Bible belt portions of America (which are also the politically conservative portions of America) were by far the most generous with their own money (especially in the south) and the least Christian sections of the country have been the least generous, with the six New England states filling the last six slots among the

50 states. When you compare them in terms of conservative versus liberal, the same is true. The most socialistic states have the smallest per capita charity, while the least socialistic states have the highest per capita giving.

Of course, socialist, Alan Wolfe, a political science professor at Boston College said that the reason for these statistics is that liberal secularists love to give through taxes; they are generous; it's just in a different way of giving, and it's a more fair way of giving. He said, "[they] view the tax money they're paying not as something that's forced upon them, but as a recognition that they belong with everyone else, that they're citizens in the common good... I think people here believe that when they pay their taxes, they're being altruistic." You know what altruism is, don't you? It is unselfish and generous concern for the welfare of others with no self-interest.

But statistics show that even that is a lie. The most liberal millionaires are the most likely to use every loophole in the tax codes to get out of paying taxes. Not only are they not generous in charity; they are not generous in taxes. In fact, they encourage a tax system that will burden the middle class and benefit the lower and upper classes. They are not being altruistic. Not that I blame them for reducing their taxes; I'm just criticizing their hypocrisy. I try to reduce my taxes too, because I think it is an unbiblical way of giving (or actually, of being stolen from). And though Alan Wolfe has a PhD in political science, I think he illustrates the truism from George Orwell, which states that "Some ideas are so stupid that only intellectuals could believe them."

But this first point was so graphically illustrated last week in an article in the San Jose Mercury News. They highlighted Cindy Vinson and Tom Waschura, both of whom were avid Obama supporters and avid Obamacare supporters. They did much to promote both. Last week's article says this:

...they were floored last week when they opened their bills: Their policies were being replaced with pricier plans that conform to all the requirements of the new health care law. Vinson, of San Jose, will pay \$1,800 more a year for an individual policy, while Waschura, of Portola Valley, will cough up almost \$10,000 more for insurance for his family of four. . .

"I was laughing at Boehner—until the mail came today," Waschura said, referring to House Speaker John Boehner, who is leading the Republican charge to defund Obamacare.

"I really don't like the Republican tactics, but at least now I can understand why they are so [and he uses a vulgarism here] about this. When you take \$10,000 out

of my family's pocket each year, that's otherwise disposable income or retirement savings that will not be going into our local economy." ...

"Of course, I want people to have health care," Vinson said. "I just didn't realize I would be the one who was going to pay for it personally."

What an admission. In effect he was saying, "I would love for everyone to have health care, so long as someone else is paying for it." That's not altruism. And I love the comments that someone made about the other person in this article, Cindy. One person said,

Cindy was feeling real generous until she saw that the money being spent was hers. Until then, being generous with other people's money was easy....

I've spent more time on this point because our world is filled with socialistic Zibas who want to be seen as generous and loyal, but who really are involved in theft, envy, and selfishness. They are just as small-hearted, selfish, and grasping as Ziba was. Don't let your friends guilt you into voting for or supporting socialist causes. I have had friends call me stingy because I refuse to be part of the Ziba campaigns of our century, but I guarantee you that I give far more percentagewise to charity than they do. Those campaigns from FDR to the present do not demonstrate loyalty or generosity. They are treason and theft that flows from the heart of people who are really stingy. When my liberal friends start giving away their own money like the Bible calls for, then I might take them a bit more seriously.

II. False loyalty can hide the true loyalty of others (v. 2a with 19:26)

The second characteristic of Ziba's false loyalty is that it was quick to hide and disparage the true loyalty of others. Verse 2 begins,

And the king said to Ziba, "What do you mean to do with these?" So Ziba said, ...

...and he keeps completely silent about Mephibosheth's intentions to join with David and to bless him on his journey. We read a very credible "other side of the story" account in chapter 19, but David doesn't get the other side of the story here. It is deliberately hidden by Ziba. There is not the slightest hint that Mephibosheth is a loyal subject. On the contrary, Ziba slanders him.

Now, we will look at the slander in a bit. But I think it is worthwhile examining our own hearts to see if we downplay the actions and contributions of others in order to make ourselves look better. According to Jim Moral, the professor of management at Florida State University, "...31% of employees surveyed reported that their boss was prone to

exaggerate his or her accomplishments and downplay the contributions of others.”² And it’s not just bosses. This is a pervasive sin in the workplace, in church, among pastors, among authors, and in other areas of life. They feel bad if you notice the huge contributions of others, and they will subtly ignore or downplay the contributions that others have made to their own success. And this tendency flows from insecurity, wanting to look better than we really are, from pride, fear, and lack of a servant’s heart.

If you tend to struggle with this sin, I would encourage you to spend a lot of time memorizing and meditating upon the book of Philippians. That book is a great antidote to this form of false loyalty. In the book of Philippians, Paul seeks to help us put on the self-sacrificing attitudes of Jesus in every area of life and to enter more and more into the supernatural joy of the Lord in those same areas of life. The Holy Spirit is *the greatest example* of glorifying others without having to be glorified Himself. He always glorifies and points to the Son just as the Son glorifies and points to the Father. And if you are filled with the same Holy Spirit, you will delight in building others up and giving them the credit and you will feel grieved when others are torn down or their contributions are minimized. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, *the characteristics of the Holy Spirit, including His loyalty and concern for others*, will more and more characterize your life. He will give you true loyalty.

III. False loyalty can give the illusion of compassion (v. 2b)

The third characteristic of Ziba’s false loyalty was the illusion of compassion. Take a look at the rest of verse 2:

...So Ziba said, “The donkeys *are* for the king’s household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who are faint in the wilderness to drink.”

Now this does indeed look like compassion. I read from the poem last week that said,

Pity weeps and runs away;
Compassion comes to help and stay.

And Ziba has come to help and stay, right? Am I being unfair in accusing Ziba of false compassion? I don’t think so. Chapter 19 contrasts the true compassion of Mephibosheth with the false compassion of Ziba on several levels. Let me give you five contrasts.

² <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201011/bullying-and-culture-incivility>

First, where Ziba was using David for self-advancement, Mephibosheth told David he didn't want anything from him; that he was just glad that David was safe. In fact, he said that he didn't deserve what David had previously given him anyway. In other words, it wasn't about what he could get out of it, but it was about David. He loved David and was grieved for David. He showed true compassion. Ziba shows compassion only when there is something in it for him.

Second, Ziba abandoned Mephibosheth and left the cripple helpless (there is no compassion there), but here he shows compassion to David. So if you are very, very selective in whom you are compassionate to, and you can be compassionate to one person and cruel to another, you are more like Ziba than like Mephibosheth. You need the grace of The Lord Jesus Christ to transform you. If Ziba truly had compassion, he would have shown compassion to both men.

Third, Ziba is quite willing to take all Mephibosheth's property (which we will see shortly is actually a form of theft on David's part – but Ziba is willing to participate in it), whereas Mephibosheth is not grasping in the least. When David offers to give half of Mephibosheth's property back to him, Mephibosheth tells David, "Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house." Compassion is not consistent with Ziba's grasping character, but is totally consistent with Mephibosheth's contentment and humility. When you are examining compassion, you need to see if the other graces that accompany compassion are present.

Fourth, where Ziba gave other people's goods to David, Mephibosheth was really the one who had given those goods to David, and Ziba had taken credit for it.

And fifth, where Ziba focused on the opportunity, Mephibosheth focused on the person. And chapter 19 makes the inspired comment that Mephibosheth spent the entire time of David's absence mourning and not caring for his feet, his mustache, or washing his clothes. He didn't know if David would ever come back, so he didn't do that to be seen by David. He did it because he truly mourned for David.

So when you see the compassion of Mephibosheth side by side with the compassion of Ziba, you realize that Ziba's falls short. It's a pretty good counterfeit, but it was false. And since we saw last week that compassion and loyalty are tied up in each other, false compassion points to false loyalty.

So that is the meaning of the text; what are some applications? Well, compassion has been at the heart of the arguments in favor of Obamacare and other forms of socialism. Anyone who opposes Obamacare is accused of being a heartless person who does not care for the poor. This past February, Bob Morris said, “Ron Paul lacks compassion, humanity, and common sense.” (Feb 5, 2013) But is it true that the Ron Paul’s of our society lack compassion and the liberals who promote the welfare state are the truly compassionate ones? We could look at Ron Paul and disprove it for him. But let’s look at the bigger picture. Any number of books thoroughly refute the charge that conservatives lack compassion and liberals have it. While liberalism may seem compassionate in it’s rhetoric (and while there may be some very compassionate liberals), generally speaking, liberalism does not improve the state of the poor, but perpetuates it. In fact, statistics since the time off FDR show that socialism has made things far worse. I would highly recommend that you read E. Calvin Beisner’s book, *Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate Use of Resources in a Scarce World*. It demonstrates very cogently that a small state with a totally free market economy is the best way of benefiting everyone who needs our compassion. Or come to the book study on Road to serfdom, by Hayek that will be starting at the Swab's home this Tuesday. Or read Marvin Olasky’s book, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, which brilliantly shows how destructive all socialistic attempts to solve problems have really been, and how destructive it has really been to true compassion. True compassion is founded on voluntarism, makes personal sacrifices, and opens up opportunities for the victim rather than dependency. Just as with Ziba, our nation’s ideas on compassion are just as false as its notions of loyalty.

IV. False loyalty is built on falsity and continues to engage in falsity (v. 3b)

The fourth characteristic is that false loyalty is built on falsity and continues to engage in falsity. Ziba’s statement in verse 3 is an utter lie.

2Sam. 16:3 Then the king said, “And where *is* your master’s son?” And Ziba said to the king, “Indeed he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, ‘Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.’ ”

Of course, we don’t discover that this is an utter lie until chapter 19. The lie is pretty convincing to David, and he is deceived by it. But Ziba has to keep lying in order to maintain the pretense of loyalty.

Let me give some applications. If your goal is not to repent of sin, but rather to portray your actions as righteous, automatically deceitfulness will

continue to grow; of necessity it must continue to grow. False loyalty can only be buttressed and sustained if falsity continues. That's why our nation is pervasively a nation of deceit. The media is filled with it. Most of the major networks are just propaganda. But we need to be so careful that we ourselves do not engage in exaggerations and propaganda.

Let me apply this problem in a different area: If a person who views porn does not immediately repent and confess his sin, then he has to start hiding his sin. But the very act of hiding it necessitates more and more falsity. It's just the nature of sin. This is why almost all addicts are notorious liars. If you find a person addicted to cocaine, don't trust a word he says. There must be measurable 24-7 accountability with homework that kills the impulse to lying before such a person can ever be restored to integrity.

But it is not just addicts. Anyone who makes a pretense at loyalty is going to find lying becoming easier and easier. Let me illustrate it. United States Senators take the following oath of office:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion [and that's exactly what Oliver Wendell Holmes' book and Strauss' book are doing – it is allowing mental reservation and evading the clear original intent of the Constitution. But they swear to support and defend it “without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion”]; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God.³

First of all, I don't understand how atheists can seriously take that oath and say, “So help me God.” But beyond that, Senators and Congressmen perjure themselves and violate their oath of office within weeks of getting into office by proposing bills or voting for bills that they themselves know our founding fathers would have hated. Their whole work is built on a lie. And they have to continue to lie to the public to make it seem like loyalty.

Occasionally it will slip out that they know what they are doing is unconstitutional. They were getting so bold in the years leading up to the War Between the States, that numerous Congressmen admitted that they despised the Constitution and that they had no intention of being limited by it. One Congressmen threw a Constitution on the ground and trampled on it. William Wells Brown said,

³ http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Oath_Office.htm

I would have the Constitution torn in shreds and scattered to the four winds of heaven. Let us destroy the Constitution and build on its ruins the temple of liberty.⁴

And he and his colleagues did seek to destroy the constitution. They routinely voted for things that they knew violated the original intent of the Constitution. They knowingly lied when they took their oath.

And there are some people almost that bold today. But usually they still feel like they need to at least pretend loyalty to the Constitution. So Pelosi one time told Congress that they needed to uphold their oath to defend the Constitution by supporting her bills to restrict gun ownership. Weird. This Constitution-destroyer had the audacity to tell Congress that they needed to uphold the Constitution by supporting her bills that undermined the Second Amendment?! Give me a break! Another liberal castigated the Republicans for violating their oath of office by not approving the budget some weeks ago. Very odd. Their argument was that the Constitution says that the Congress is supposed to pay for all debts. They've turned the whole debate completely on its head. So at the very time that they routinely violate the Constitution, they falsely claim that this failure to vote for the budget was a violation of the Constitution. But it makes sense - once you are committed to a false loyalty to the Constitution (which is exactly what you are doing when you treat it as a living document), you will find falsity everywhere. It becomes bolder and bolder. And that's the next point:

V. False loyalty tends to encourage more false loyalty - Birds of a feather (v. 3a with 5ff)

The fifth characteristic of Ziba's false loyalty is that it spreads. It was started in Saul's administration, spread to Saul's servant Ziba, and in verses 5 and following, we see false loyalty fiercely defended by another relative of Saul, Shimei, and by others. Birds of a feather tend to flock together, so I don't think it is by accident that David says in verse 3, "And where is your master's son?" At this point Ziba's master is really Mephibosheth, so it is odd that David would call his master Saul. But commentators say that this shows that David is distrustful of all the Saulide clan, and here he is somewhat suspicious that a close servant of Saul like Ziba would really care about him fleeing. So rather than asking "Where is your master?" which would be the reference to Mephibosheth, he asks, "Where is your master's son?" It's pointing back to Saul. Commentators point out that this whole first half of the chapter revolves around the continuing threat and influence of Saul. But whatever David's intent happened to be in the way he worded

⁴ <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/w/williamwel176341.html#e2WyTmBw1vAMUZ6g.99>

this question, it appears that the author includes the statement because Ziba is really more like Saul than he is like Mephibosheth. David was implying that he is still obeying and imitating his master Saul. And of course we saw that Saul definitely had false loyalty to God, country, and the Bible's laws. So that is a long-round-about-way of saying that this illustrates the fact that false loyalty tends to breed false loyalty in others.

And we see that in so many spheres of life in America. Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes hated the restrictions of the Constitution, and his decisions frequently were unconstitutional. In terms of comparison, I will liken him to king Saul. But Holmes had to make his treason look like loyalty before others would buy into it, so he wrote a brilliant book called, *The Common Law*, which gave the philosophical framework for making the Constitution a wax nose that can be formed and changed to fit the times. It was basically a rationalization for ignoring inconvenient parts of the Constitution. And an even more convincing attempt at this same thing is David Strauss's recent book, *The Living Constitution*. If you just pull out the statements that show how much he despises the constitution, he looks like a bad guy. For example, statements like this: "[the constitution is] a hindrance, a relic that keeps us from making progress and prevents our society from working in the way it should."⁵ But when you read his whole argument, he comes across quite convincing – as if this was what the founding fathers had in mind all the time. And so you do find that those who are disloyal feel like they need to convince others that what they are doing is really loyalty. And the pattern spreads. And certainly it has spread very quickly in the judicial sphere.

Now, since almost every Congressman, Senator, and federal judge ignores the original intent of the Constitution, to some people it seems bizarre to even ask them to defend their actions from the Constitution. Glenn Beck played a clip of a man asking Nancy Pelosi, "Madam Speaker, where specifically does the Constitution grant Congress the authority to enact an individual health insurance mandate?" Her response? She mocked him as if he was an idiot for even asking the question, and said, "Are you serious? Are you serious?"⁶ That's how pervasively false loyalty has spread in our nation – she can treat anyone who speaks of true loyalty as being a nutcase. But it illustrates how quickly false loyalty can spread within a body.

⁵ <http://www.law.uchicago.edu/alumni/magazine/fall10/strauss>

⁶ <http://newsrealblog.wordpress.com/2009/12/22/leftists-dont-care-what-the-constitution-says/>

This is why denomination after denomination of churches has gone liberal. Ministers and elders have joined the denomination and sworn to uphold the Constitution of the denomination while not really believing it. Gary North wrote a big fat book on the subject called, *Crossed Fingers: How the Liberals Captured the Presbyterian Church*. And because the liberals were not disciplined, they were able to influence others to become liberals, until the conservatives were a tiny minority. What he documents there is the same process that you see in quite a number of other liberal denominations.

But let's apply this to the home. When dads profess to love God's law in church, but at home they routinely break it, kids pick up on that and they imitate dad, or mom. They begin to develop two lives as well – a life that professes one thing in front of their parents and a totally different thing in front of others. Why would they do that? And the answer is, because you are modeling that to them. You are the most powerful influence in their lives. In front of Mephibosheth (or an elder or a parent) that young person can be very loyal, but when that young Ziba leaves the presence of Mephibosheth (or the parent or the elder) and the stand in front of a David, he or she has no problem kicking Mephibosheth in the stomach. I have especially seen this on Facebook. Sometimes people don't realize that if they want their comments to only be read by their friends, they had better adjust the settings to not make their comments public. Well, their ignorance of Facebook settings has made them post things that I have been astonished at, and I am sure that they were horrified at when I brought the sin to their attention. But I can see that they are a Ziba who has been influenced by a Saul, and they are influencing other people to have a double life, depending on whether they are in front of a Mephibosheth or in front of a David. Disloyalty spreads. Satan and his demons make sure that it spreads. It must be nipped in the bud or it will spread.

VI. False loyalty destroys real loyalty (v. 3b)

The sixth characteristic is that false loyalty destroys real loyalty. And actually, we have been seeing that in the last point. It's implied. But point VI shows that it becomes harder and harder to be truly loyal. In the second part of verse 3, Ziba betrays the very person that has made him successful - Mephibosheth. And in the next point we will see that he succeeds in getting David to do a disloyal thing. If it hadn't been for Mephibosheth, Ziba would be nowhere. But in one hasty word he destroys a relationship. It's not even a very good lie. Could anyone believe that with Absalom taking over the throne that the throne would be restored to Mephibosheth? I doubt it. But

lies don't have to be very good when people don't care about truth, faithfulness, or loyalty anymore.

I was listening to one Congressman being interviewed about where in the Constitution it gave him the authority to approve the health care bill that he voted for. He brushed it aside by saying, "I don't care about the Constitution on this issue... I care more about the people who are dying every day who don't have health care..." [the interviewer asked again, "Where in the Constitution does it give you the authority to ..."] and the Congressman interrupted and said, "I don't know. But at the end of the day I want to bring insurance to every person who lives in this country."⁷ Here is a man in the name of loyalty to people destroying the very foundation of trust and loyalty anywhere. He is a man I could not trust with anything that I own. If he is able to so flippantly violate a solemn oath of office, for sure don't trust him with your daughter, your watch, or anything else.

But it's not just Democrats. I have the same problem with Republicans. I talked at great length with one Senator and her staff about twelve ways in which the Fairness Tax was unconstitutional – and actually as being specifically mentioned as being *disallowed* in the Constitution, and though neither she nor her staff could answer any of these objections, she voted for it anyway. Well, if she can deliberately violate the Constitution on that vote, I don't care how conservative her other votes are, she is not to be trusted. She has destroyed any ability for me to trust her in office, even though she is better than her opponents. She can talk all she wants about loyalty to American values, she lacks authenticity. When former DNC Chairman, Howard Dean was asked about its constitutionality, he said, "I don't think it is unconstitutional, but I don't care whether it is or not..." he was destroying any ability for people to trust him in the future. It's no wonder that other countries do not trust America. I don't trust it. Disloyalty has become so pervasive, that true loyalty has been evaporated.

Similar stories can be cited from Senators, Congressmen, Judges, from Doug Shulman (former head of the IRS), and from other agency heads. At the very time they defend their false loyalty (as being the real thing), they must of necessity trash true loyalty. The two go hand in hand.

VII. False loyalty destroys covenant relationships (v. 4a)

The seventh characteristic of Ziba's false loyalty is that it destroyed a covenant relationship and actually had the potential of destroying

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgh-q4t0kzM>

Mephibosheth. I doubt that Ziba expected Mephibosheth to come out of this alive. Verse 4 begins

So the king said to Ziba, “Here, all that *belongs* to Mephibosheth *is* yours.”

David had shown good judgment, humility, and character up to this point, but commentators all agree that David is now showing extremely poor judgment and poor character in this action. There has been no trial, no witnesses, no cross examination; nothing. For David to give away Mephibosheth’s property to Ziba in this fashion is simply old-fashioned statist theft. He later realizes that it was a big mistake, but he only slightly modifies this executive order. And it is a gross misuse of executive orders, completely unauthorized in the Bible. With one sentence from David’s mouth, he destroys his sacred covenant with Mephibosheth and destroys a man’s life. And there are so many people being destroyed in America with the stroke of a pen, in the name of loyalty.

And commentators point out how the first nineteen verses of this chapter show example after example of how loyalty is confused, missascribed, and turned upside down with ease. And if that can happen with David, it can certainly happen today. We must guard ourselves against not just the grosser forms of disloyalty, like divorce, perjury, and theft. We must also put off anything that leads up to that. People can pride themselves in never having considered divorce, but they break their vows daily, not through divorcing, but through disrespect, failure to love and to hold, failure to honor. It’s a form of false loyalty that has destroyed intimacy and taken the heart out of the covenant relationship. And God’s call is to return to the first works so that the first love can be restored. David should not have so easily broken covenant with Mephibosheth.

VIII. False loyalty is man centered (v. 4b – “that I may find favor in your sight”)

The last characteristic of Ziba’s false loyalty is that it is man-centered. In verse 4 he gives the true reason for why he has brought these things to David. Second sentence:

And Ziba said, “I humbly bow before you, *that* I may find favor in your sight, my lord, O king!”

He wanted David’s favor. And in this case, David’s favor paid off – it was lucrative. And this man-centered attitude of currying favor and trying to get others to serve our interests drives so much politics – even with citizens. I can’t believe how easily conservatives take benefits. They are liberals;

they're not really conservatives. The false loyalties that we have seen across the landscape will not be reversed until we Christians become God-centered in all our thinking.

I frequently tell people who are getting marriage counseling that unless their motivation is to please God, its going to be hard for them to do the necessary things to solve their marriage problems. If your motivation is to get rid of the pain, it will let you down eventually because the pain of doing the right thing will sometimes be greater than the pain of a messed up marriage or even of a divorce. If our motivation is happiness, it will let us down because God has called us to be more interested in holiness than in happiness, and there are times when the two are mutually exclusive. I think this is illustrated so well in Larry Crabb's book, *Inside Out*. I don't recommend the book, but I do think he hit on the problem of being man-centered in counseling in one of his chapters. He said,

A man opened a counseling session with an urgent request: "I want to feel better quick."

I paused for a moment, then replied, "I suggest you get a case of your favorite alcoholic beverage, find some cooperative women, and go to the Bahamas for a month."

Now it was his turn to pause. He stared at me, looking puzzled, then asked, "Are you a Christian?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Well, your advice doesn't sound very biblical."

"It's the best I can do given your request. If you really want to feel good right away and get rid of any unpleasant emotion, then I don't recommend following Christ. Drunkenness, immoral pleasures, and vacations will work far better. Not for long, of course, but in the short run they'll give you what you want." (p. 83)

He was basically asking this man to make the decision of whether he was willing to pick up his cross and follow Christ no matter what, or if he would only put in enough effort to once again feel good (which would be a man-centered motive). Just as that man got a lousy answer because he had a lousy question, if we remain man-centered in our loyalties, we will have lousy outcomes. When the going gets tough, our loyalty to marriage will fail. When disagreements arise, our loyalty to church will dissolve. When the state becomes corrupt, we will ditch all loyalty in the civil sphere.

But on the other hand, when we embrace the principles of loyalty that we looked at last week, then our desire to be fiercely loyal to God will color all of our human loyalties and transform them. So we should be loyal to our wives because our loyalty to God demands it, defines it, and limits it. But the

same loyalty to God will prevent us from making an idol out of loyalty to party, family, or anything else. In fact, fierce loyalty to God will keep us from fudging on our other loyalties like happened recently with a leading Reformed figure that we have been reading about. It is so critical that we not ignore this issue of true loyalty, and that's why we have been spending so long on it. If this famous Church leader could break loyalty with his wife, perhaps every one of us needs to cry out to God to protect our hearts and to help us to cling to the cross rather than to rationalize sin. The moment the temptation to negotiate our way into a lesser loyalty than being totally sold out to Christ comes along, we must reject it.

Conclusion

Let me conclude with a parable that illustrates the dangers of playing the game of loyalty by the world's standards. This writer said,

I once heard a story about a hunter who went deep into the woods in search of a bear. It seems that he wanted to shoot one and skin it for its coat. After a long wait, the hunter finally had a huge brown bear in his sight. Wrapping his finger slowly around the trigger and holding the barrel steady, he aimed for the center of the hulking animal's very large forehead.

Just as the hunter was preparing to squeeze the trigger, the bear turned around and, catching the hunter by surprise, said in a soft voice, "Wait! Let's talk this thing over! Isn't it better to talk than to shoot?"

The hunter was so surprised that he lowered his gun. The bear thanked him and said, "Now, what is that you want? Can't we negotiate?"

"Well," the hunter replied, "actually, all I want is a fur coat!"

"Good," the bear said, "All I want is a meal!"

As the two sat down to negotiate, the hunter dropped his guard and laid his rifle down on a big, gray rock. Then the two went into the forest to talk. After a while, the bear came back out, alone. Apparently, the negotiations had been successful. The bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had his fur coat.⁸

You negotiate with a bear and you will get eaten. You negotiate with Satan and you will get eaten. You negotiate with a principled liberal, and you will get eaten. And the reason is the same in all three situations – they aren't interested in the truth.

Don't negotiate truth, loyalty, or trustworthiness no matter how good the goal might seem to be. And I think evangelicals do this all the time in politics. Political pragmatists believe that this is the only way that they can

⁸ Greg Laurie, *Lies We Tell Ourselves: How to Say No To Temptation and Put an End to Compromise* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light Publications, 2006), pp. 64-65.

win in politics, but it is better to lose and hold your integrity than to win and lose your integrity. David was tested here, and he lost some capital with his friends and supporters. By giving Ziba all of Mephibosheth's property without diligent examination of the truth, he became a statist, and he burned what little trust he had regained with friends and citizens, and it led to huge complications in the upcoming chapters. The moment David begins to play the same game that others have been playing, he loses. People of character can't play the game of false loyalty as well as other can, and so they will always lose. God makes sure that they lose. Praise God for His faithfulness to this Reformed church leader that I just mentioned to you. Because he was a true believer, God would not allow him to continue in self-deception. God made sure that His false loyalty would make him lose, and I believe God made him lose so that he could gain eternally. Just this morning Kathy shared with me a devotions, where Satan asked Jesus permission to sift Peter. And Jesus gave Satan permission, but also prayed for Peter that he would not fail. And Peter grew through the process. Pray for that family. I love that man, and I hope that they can emerge from this mess even stronger.

So let me end by encouraging you to be faithful to your vows. It might be worthwhile to pull out your wedding vows and to ask God in what specific ways you have been exercising false loyalty to them. It might be worthwhile to pull out your church membership vows and see if there are any of them that you are being unfaithful to. Those vows include the PeaceMakers Pledge. They include tithing to the local church. They include praying for each other and engaging in body life. Like Oliver Wendell Holmes, you may have your rationalizations as to why these vows mean something totally different today than they did way back then, but it still amounts to false loyalty. And disloyalty impacts us negatively within (and spreads within) and it impacts others negatively outside (and spreads outside).

If the bear of false loyalty wants to negotiate an easier way, shoot it. If the weed of false loyalty springs up in your lawn like a dandelion, pluck it up by the roots. And as you put off the fake, ask Jesus to help you put on true loyalty along with all the rest of the fruit of the Spirit. Amen.

Loyalty Tested, part 3

2 Samuel 16:1-4

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 11-3-2013

Introduction

I. False loyalty can be generous with other people's property (v. 1)



II. False loyalty can hide the true loyalty of others (v. 2a with 19:26)

III. False loyalty can give the illusion of compassion (v. 2b)

IV. False loyalty is built on falsity and continues to engage in falsity (v. 3b)

V. False loyalty tends to encourage more false loyalty - Birds of a feather (v. 3a with 5ff)

VI. False loyalty destroys real loyalty (v. 3b)

VII. False loyalty destroys covenant relationships (v. 4a)

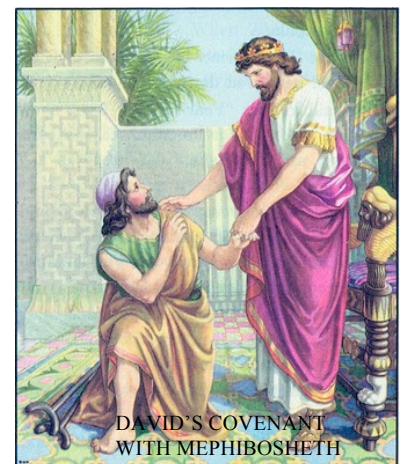
VIII. False loyalty is man centered (v. 4b – “that I may find favor in your sight”)

Conclusion

VILLAGE IDIOTS? OR BRILLIANT FALSE LOYALTY?

Warmism: “In the 21st Century, the reality is that there are environmental threats which constitute threats to our national security. For example, the area of climate change has a dramatic impact on national security: rising sea levels, to severe droughts, to the melting of the polar caps, to more frequent and devastating natural disasters all raise demand for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.” –Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta

“If ‘business as usual’ conditions continue, economic contractions the size of the Great Recession or even bigger will be needed to reduce atmospheric levels of CO₂. ... One solution that has promise is a carbon tax levied on any activity producing CO₂ in order to create incentives to reduce emissions. The money would be returned to the population on a per capita basis so the tax would not mean any extra fiscal burden.” –researcher Jose Tapia Granados calling for another economic slowdown to combat global warming



DAVID'S COVENANT
WITH MEPHIBOSHETH