

Series: Rooted in Faith
Sermon: The Mother Who Wouldn't Back Down
Text: 2 Samuel 21:8-14

Scripture

8 But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab, whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai, the Meholathite. 9 He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed them and exposed their bodies on a hill before the Lord. All seven of them fell together, they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning. 10 Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds touch them by day or the wild animals by night. 11 When David was told what Aiah's daughter Rizpah, Saul's concubine, had done, 12 he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. (They had stolen their bodies from the public square at Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa). 13 David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there, and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up. 14 They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul's father Kish, at Zela in Benjamin, and did everything the king commanded. After that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land.

Sermon Notes

The story of Rizpah, mother of murdered sons *Armoni* and *Mephibosheth* could have easily gotten caught-up in the biblical *Master-Narratives* of Kings and noble man had not the intricate handiwork of God provided a counter-narrative revealing "Her-story" in history.

The context of the sermon text is set in the fledgling nation of Israel with newly anointed King David, as they faced famine and economic despair. King David's prayers confirmed the national problems were caused by a genocide executed upon Israel's Gibeonite rivals, during the previous administration under King Saul.

King David brokered an atonement deal with the *Gibeonites* to have seven descendants of King Saul offered for execution in exchange for peace and hope for an end to the famine. Two of the men killed were Rizpah's sons *Armoni* and *Mephibosheth*.

Socially positioned as King Saul's concubine (2 Samuel 3:7) or unofficial wife, Rizpah only had status through her sons' relationship to their father. Their executions left her holding nothing but her son's bones. British rabbi "*Jonathan Magonet has described Rizpah as 'every mother who sees her sons killed before their time for reasons of state, be they in time of peace or in war. All that remains is for her to preserve the dignity of their memory and live on to bear witness and call to account the rulers of the world'.*"

Therefore, Rizpah watched over the rotting carcasses and later bones seeking honor and respect for her sons by demanding King David give them a proper burial with their father.

Sermon Points:

The sermon emphasizes we should Remember Rizpah for the following qualities:

I. Remember her Passion

Rizpah loved her sons with a passionate love that defied death. Her mother's love didn't allow her to 'move on' when others did. We should never become adjusted to the death of our children.

II. Remember her Persistence

Rizpah held vigil for her children for six months. She defended against literal and metaphysical vultures that would have pick apart her children.

III. Remember her Purpose

Rizpah's purpose was to remind King David and everyone that her sons were children of a King. She preserved their dignity.

IV. Remember her Power

Rizpah asserted power which persuaded King David to be accountable for his actions and she also moved God to end the famine. A praying momma has power.

Questions

1. How do you feel about King David's decision to turn over Saul's descendants to be executed?
2. Should family members be accountable for their relatives' transgressions? Why or why not?
3. What is honor and why was it important to Rizpah? What honor are you willing to uphold and how far will you go?
4. Do you feel Rizpah's actions were worth the sacrifices she made? Explain.
5. Share experiences about your mother's (or mother figure's) passion, persistence, purpose and/or power in your life.