

**Worship Material**  
**Reaping the whirlwind**  
**Material from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 11th August**

**Begin with opening prayer**

Creator God, thank you for the freedom you have given to us all. Forgive us for the times humankind has abused that freedom and caused hurt, breeding resentment, anger and revenge. Help us to see again your love for us all and to commit ourselves to seeing your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.

**Amen.**

**Read 2 Samuel 18:5-9,15,31-33**

**Bible notes**

Rape, arson, open-air philandering, treason, and a coup d'état have all taken place in David's family when we pick up the story again in 2 Samuel 18. Nathan's pronouncements come sooner than anticipated (2 Samuel 12:11-13). In summary, David was reaping the whirlwind. Amnon, David's eldest son, duped him and raped his half-sister, Tamar, without punishment or redress (2 Samuel 13:1-21). Two years later, an enraged Absalom, Tamar's brother, sought justice by killing Amnon and was exiled to Geshur, his mother's homeland, ruled by his maternal grandfather, for three years (2 Samuel 13:23-39). On his return, Absalom is still in a form of exile as he does not see his father for two years. However, his desire for justice and to overthrow his father is not diminished (2 Samuel 15).

David would have to fight Absalom and his followers to regain his kingdom. David's unconditional love for Absalom demands preserving his life, despite the humiliation, treason and dishonour (v.5). The ensuing bloody battles spread nationwide, with thousands of lives lost (vv.6-8).

The text is bookended by David's strict instructions not to harm Absalom and his lament when the news of Absalom's death reached him (vv.5, 33). Absalom's choice of a mule (v.9) is rather strange. Unlike horses, mules are not known for their intelligence, speed or stamina but are symbols of peace. Absalom's hair, which brought great admiration and national fame and symbolised his strength (2 Samuel 14:25-6), contributed to his downfall. He was unprepared for battle.

'And all the troops heard the king...' is an undisputable order (v.5). David's trusted nephew, Joab, bore a grudge against Absalom and tried and failed to bribe and persuade others to murder him (vv.11-13). Verse 15 implies that Joab's armour bearers killed Absalom. However, Joab first thrust three javelins into Absalom's heart (v.14). Joab disobeys the king's instructions out of his own self-interest.

**Prayer**

Father, we thank you for all the loving relationships in our lives, even though they may be complicated or challenging. We praise you for this many-faceted thing called love,

that can survive the darkest days of despair,  
and lives on in our hearts even when loved ones are gone.  
Thank you for your love, which neither death  
nor despair can break.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer to conclude**

Almighty God, we thank you for the freedom you give us.  
Guide us in the week to come.  
Through our actions, may we share your love and kindness  
and draw people closer to you.  
When we make mistakes, help us to make amends quickly  
so your grace is still seen.  
We give this week to you and ask that your will would be done.  
**Amen.**