Letting Go of Control and Learning to Trust
2 Samuel 15:13–31
November 15, 2026

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 15:13–31 (ESV; selected verses below)

David Flees Jerusalem
13 And a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom."
14 Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword." 15 And the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king decides."
25 Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his dwelling place. 26 But if he says, 'I have no pleasure in you,' behold, here I am, let him do to me what seems good to him."

30 But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went. 31 And it was told David, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness."

MAIN THEME

David's own son was seizing the throne, and his trusted counselor had joined the conspiracy. Forced to flee Jerusalem, David could not control what happened next. Yet he sent the ark back to the city, prayed for God's intervention, and entrusted his future to the Lord.

David took responsibility for what he could do and surrendered to God what he couldn't control. Trusting God did not mean doing nothing. He made decisions, organized his people, and took practical steps while leaving the outcome in God's hands.

Surrender did not erase David's tears. We too can trust God while grieving deeply. Although David's crisis included consequences of his sin, not every painful situation results from a particular personal sin. Whatever has brought us here, we can bring our desires and pain to the Savior who suffered for us.

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. The Control We Think We Have Is Often an Illusion

2 Samuel 15:13, 25–26; Proverbs 16:9

- What news did David receive, and what could he no longer control?
- What did sending the ark back to Jerusalem reveal about David's trust in God?
- How can we express our desires to God without insisting that he fulfill them our way?
- Is there a person, outcome, or uncertainty you are struggling to place in God's hands?

2. When Life Spins Out of Control, Trust God to Guide Your Next Steps

2 Samuel 15:14–15, 27–29, 31; Proverbs 16:9; James 1:5

• What practical steps did David take to protect his people and prepare for the future?
• How does David's prayer about Ahithophel show that surrender can include specific requests?
• What is the difference between trusting God with an outcome and avoiding responsibility?
• What next faithful step can you take this week while trusting God with what you cannot change?

3. Giving Up Control Doesn't Take Away the Pain

2 Samuel 15:30; Psalm 3:3–5; Matthew 11:28

• What does David's departure up the Mount of Olives tell us about the depth of his grief?
• Why is it helpful to see David trusting God and weeping at the same time?
• How can Psalm 3 encourage us when our circumstances remain unresolved?
• What burden do you need to bring honestly to God, and how could someone walk with you through it?

4. The Savior Who Asks Us to Trust Him Understands Our Pain

Luke 22:39–42; Hebrews 4:15–16; 1 Peter 2:22–24

• How did Jesus express both his desire and his surrender to the Father in Gethsemane?
• David suffered partly because of his own sin. How was the sinless Jesus' suffering different?
• How does knowing that Jesus suffered for our sins help us trust him with our pain?
• What would it look like to pray honestly, "Not my will, but yours, be done," in your situation?

PRAY

Dear Lord, you know what we are trying to carry and how hard it can be to let go. Help us place our desires, fears, and future in your hands. Give us wisdom to do what you have put before us and faith to trust you with the outcome. You suffered for our sins and understand our pain. Carry us through what we cannot control, and help us take the next faithful step. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For Further Study:

• Psalm 3
• Proverbs 3:5–6; 16:9
• Matthew 11:28–30
• Luke 22:39–46
• Hebrews 4:14–16
• 1 Peter 2:21–25; 5:6–7

NEXT WEEK

A Father's Broken Heart: David Mourns the Loss of Absalom
2 Samuel 18:31–33