

2 Samuel 18:9-15

⁹Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. His head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on. ¹⁰A man saw it, and told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in an oak." ¹¹Joab said to the man who told him, "What, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt." ¹²But the man said to Joab, "Even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not raise my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying: For my sake protect the young man Absalom! ¹³On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof." ¹⁴Joab said, "I will not waste time like this with you." He took three spears in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absalom, while he was still alive in the oak. ¹⁵And ten young men, Joab's armour-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him, and killed him.

The Bible is not just a book of nice stories. It contains many accounts of horrific acts, some declared to be in the name of God. The whole of life is just about contained within its pages including love and treachery.

In this passage we find Absalom, a son of King David, hanging from the branches of a tree. The one who found him went and spoke to Joab, one of the leaders of David's army. Absalom was leading a revolt against his father; he was seeking after power and rule for himself. Joab was on David's side but he was not obedient to the command of David on this and more than one other occasion. He said he would have paid the servant for killing Absalom. It would appear the servant was not so sure "if I had dealt treacherously against his life, then you yourself would have stood aloof."

How often do people, leaders, seek to distance themselves from an event after it has happened claiming no responsibility and knowledge?

Absalom, despite being opposed to David was still a loved son. David hoped for reconciliation; the death of Absalom meant that could not be.

We move forward many centuries and there is another Son, the Son of the Almighty God himself hung upon a tree. This Son was not leading a rebellion but was seeking to bring reconciliation between humanity, creation and God. The Father did not cry out that the Son should not be harmed but allowed his Son to be killed, and stabbed, that reconciliation could happen.

The death of Jesus was not the killing of a traitor but of the faithful one. His death made the way for reconciliation to happen; the love of the Father was not for the Son alone but was for all people, indeed for all of creation.

In this case the love of the Father, God, was so great that death was not the end, resurrection followed. Since then the story has been told and billions of people have come to experience the Love of God in their own life and found reconciliation with the Creator of all.

If that is you do not hide from the event, do not stand aloof, but tell others about it. Tell others of the joy of reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus.