

We All Need A Home

Psalms 68:4-6 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. (5) A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation. (6) God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.

On my recent trip to India, and especially the orphanage in Mizoram, I was thinking about the need for a home.

Everybody needs a home. A place where they are nurtured, they are loved, they are fed. A place of safety and rest, a place where you are accepted and wanted.

That is why the orphanage is called the Audrene Scism Children's Home – because it is home for these kids. It is their family.

I was thinking about how hard it must be for them when they grow up and turn 18, because then they have to leave the home. It is usual for a child to leave home and strike out on their own when they become an adult, but the difference with these children is that they can never go back. Even if they were able to come back and visit, it wouldn't be the same. The other children – their siblings - would have changed. Even the staff – their parents – would probably be different.

How hard would that be? That is because we all know in our heart that we need a home. It is all the things I mentioned before, and more. As well as a family home, we also need a Church home.

Let's look at some people in the scripture and what their stories tell us about our need for a home:

In Judges 20 you will find the story about the time that the rest of Israel went to war with one of their tribes, the tribe of Benjamin. I won't go into the reason for the war, but you can read that for yourself sometime.

Anyway, the tribe of Benjamin had 26,000 men, against 400,000 from the rest of Israel. The battle took place at the city of Gibeah. On the first two days Benjamin easily won the battle, killing 22,000 the first day and 18,000 the second day. On the third day Israel had another plan.

Some of the Israelites hid, and when Benjamin came out of the city and began to fight Israel, the ones in hiding went into the city and set it on fire.

Judges 20:40-41 But when the cloud began to rise from the city in a column of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and there was the whole city going up *in smoke* to heaven. (41) And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin panicked, for they saw that disaster had come upon them.

When Benjamin could not return to their home city, they were easily defeated. Their home was where they could rest from the battle and prepare for the next one, where they refresh and re-arm and re-organize. Once they saw they were caught outside their home, and couldn't return, they knew they were done for.

Then there was Abner. When Saul the king had died, Judah made David their king, but the head of Saul's army, whose name was Abner, made Ishbosheth the son of Saul the king over the rest of Israel.

In the end there was a battle between the men of Judah, led by David's captain Joab, and the men of Israel, led by Abner. After the battle Abner killed Asahel, the brother of Joab, and Joab therefore was out to kill Abner.

In Israel God had instituted "Cities of Refuge". If you had killed someone accidentally, or in self-defense, as Abner had done, you could flee to the city of refuge and the "avenger of blood" could not touch them while they were there, nor would the people of the city of refuge make them leave. They were safe, as long as they stayed in the city of refuge.

To cut the story short, Abner ended up in Hebron, which was a city of refuge. Joab went to see him, but he couldn't kill him as long as he was in the city. Joab called to Abner and said, "come out here, in the gate, because I want to talk to you." Foolishly Abner came out to the gate of the city, and Joab stabbed him and killed him.

King David said **"2 Samuel 3:33-34** And the king sang *a lament* over Abner and said: "Should Abner die as a fool dies? (34) Your hands were not bound Nor your feet put into fetters; As a man falls before wicked men, so you fell." Then all the people wept over him again.

Abner was a fool because he left the place of safety. He knew there was someone out there who wanted to kill him, but no-one made him leave the place of safety and refuge. He wasn't bound or in chains and delivered to Joab. He went outside the city of refuge, and that was the end of him.

Last but not least was Shimei. He was of the family of Saul, and when David became King Shimei was very upset, and cursed David and threw stones at him. One of David's men said, **2 Samuel 16:9** Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!"

David wouldn't let him, and a few chapters later we see that Shimei became a supporter of David and asked his forgiveness for cursing him. What happened to Shimei in the end?

In **1 Kings 2**, we see David was getting old, so he installed Solomon as King, and gave him instructions on what he should do. One of his instructions to Solomon was this:

1 Kings 2:8-9 "And see, you have with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' (9) Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood."

1 Kings 2:36-37 Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there anywhere. (37) For it shall be, on the day you go out and cross the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; your blood shall be on your own head."

So Shimei lived peacefully in Jerusalem for a long time, but then he had a couple of slaves run away. He heard they were in Gath, so he left the city of Jerusalem and went after them. Solomon heard about it, and that was the end of Shimei. He was immediately put to death.

If only Shimei had stayed in the city he would have been fine, but desire for his possessions got the better of him, and he made a foolish choice. He could have let them go, but he knew he would have to leave the city,

and he took that chance, and it was a very bad decision. He chose his goods over obeying what the king had said, and staying safe.

Everybody needs a home. A place where they are nurtured, they are loved, they are fed. A place of safety and rest, a place where you are accepted and wanted.

This Church is your home as well. It is a city of refuge. A place where you are protected and nurtured and wanted.

There will be temptations from outside, but don't listen to them. This is where you get your strength, where you can refresh and re-arm and re-organize. This is the place where the one who seeks to destroy you has no power to touch you. This is the place where you can choose peace and obeying the king over the deceitfulness of riches.

We all need a home. We all need a church home.