

2 Samuel 18:5-9, 31-33 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

⁵The king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.” And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders concerning Absalom. ⁶So the army went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷The men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. ⁸The battle spread over the face of all the country; and the forest claimed more victims that day than the sword.

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.

³¹Then the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, “Good tidings for my lord the king! For the LORD has vindicated you this day, delivering you from the power of all who rose up against you.” ³²The king said to the Cushite, “Is it well with the young man Absalom?” The Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up to do you harm, be like that young man.” ³³The king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

Psalm 130 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.

² Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!

³If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

⁴But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.

⁵I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;

⁶my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.

⁷O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.

⁸It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

Ephesians 4:25-5:2 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²⁵ So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. ²⁶ Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸ Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. ²⁹ Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹ Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³² and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. **5** ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ² and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.