



# A BETTER KING

## A SERIES IN 2 SAMUEL



### 2 Samuel 3 – Seeking Peace

March 19, 2023

#### Background

## 1. David's time at Hebron was a mixture of success and sin.

*There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.*  
2 Samuel 3:1 (ESV)

- Years of struggle are not wasted years. They are formative years when God is building character.

*And sons were born to David at Hebron:... 2 Samuel 3:2a (ESV)*

*And he (the king) shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.*  
Deuteronomy 17:17 (ESV)

- The legacy of David's sons shows the danger of polygamy.

*And sons were born to David at Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam of Jezreel; and his second, Chileab, of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur; and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, of Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.*  
2 Samuel 3:2-5 (ESV)

- David followed the culture instead of the Bible when it came to his sexual life. In what ways are we following the culture instead of the Bible?

## 2. The relationship between Abner and Ish-Bosheth broke down.

*While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul.* 2 Samuel 3:6 (ESV)

*Now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. And Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"*  
2 Samuel 3:7 (ESV)

Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bosheth and said, "Am I a dog's head of Judah? To this day I keep showing steadfast love to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not given you into the hand of David. And yet you charge me today with a fault concerning a woman. God do so to Abner and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the LORD has sworn to him, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba." 2 Samuel 3:8–10 (ESV)

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will. Proverbs 21:1 (ESV)

And Ish-bosheth could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him. 2 Samuel 3:11 (ESV)

And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, "To whom does the land belong? Make your covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring over all Israel to you." 2 Samuel 3:12 (ESV)

And he said, "Good; I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you; that is, you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." Then David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, for whom I paid the bridal price of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines." 2 Samuel 3:13–14 (ESV)

And Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband Paltiel the son of Laish. But her husband went with her, weeping after her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go, return." And he returned. 2 Samuel 3:15–16 (ESV)

And Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, "For some time past you have been seeking David as king over you. Now then bring it about, for the LORD has promised David, saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies.'" Abner also spoke to Benjamin. And then Abner went to tell David at Hebron all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin thought good to do. 2 Samuel 3:17–19a (ESV)

...And then Abner went to tell David at Hebron all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin thought good to do. When Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. And Abner said to David, "I will arise and go and will gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires."... 2 Samuel 3:19b–21a (ESV)

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Romans 12:18 (ESV)

...bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:2–3 (ESV)

### 3. Joab's consuming desire for revenge led to sin.

Just then the servants of David arrived with Joab from a raid, bringing much spoil with them. But Abner was not with David at Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. When Joab and all the army that was with him came, it was told Joab, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has let him go, and he has gone in peace." 2 Samuel 3:22–23 (ESV)

Then Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you. Why is it that you have sent him away, so that he is gone? You know that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you and to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing." 2 Samuel 3:24–25 (ESV)

When Joab came out from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah. But David did not know about it. 2 Samuel 3:26 (ESV)

And when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately,... 2 Samuel 3:27a (ESV)

...there he struck him in the stomach, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. 2 Samuel 3:27b (ESV)

Afterward, when David heard of it, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever guiltless before the Lord for the blood of Abner the son of Ner." 2 Samuel 3:28 (ESV)

May it fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father's house, and may the house of Joab never be without one who has a discharge or who is leprous or who holds a spindle or who falls by the sword or who lacks bread!" 2 Samuel 3:29 (ESV)

So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon. 2 Samuel 3:30 (ESV)

Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and mourn before Abner." And King David followed the bier. 2 Samuel 3:31 (ESV)

They buried Abner at Hebron. And the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept. 2 Samuel 3:32 (ESV)

And the king lamented for Abner, saying, "Should Abner die as a fool dies? Your hands were not bound; your feet were not fettered; as one falls before the wicked you have fallen." And all the people wept again over him. Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was yet day. But David swore, saying, "God do so to me and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down!" 2 Samuel 3:33–35 (ESV)

And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them, as everything that the king did pleased all the people. So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to put to death Abner the son of Ner. 2 Samuel 3:36–37 (ESV)

“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you...” Luke 6:27 (ESV)

And the king said to his servants, “Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? And I was gentle today, though anointed king. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are more severe than I. The Lord repay the evildoer according to his wickedness!” 2 Samuel 3:38–39 (ESV)

## Application

- As Jesus took the initiative and worked hard on the cross to give us peace with God, we are to take the initiative and work hard to pursue peace with others, especially other Christians.

So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.  
Romans 14:19 (ESV)

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14 (ESV)

## Life Group Questions

---

1. Read 2 Samuel 3 in your Bible or on this sermon handout. What did you learn that was new? What parts of this message were a surprise?
2. David was a great man of God, but he followed the sexual norms of society instead of the biblical command for monogamy and purity in a king's sexual life (Deuteronomy 17:17). The result was devastating to his family. As modern Christians, how do we unwittingly follow modern culture instead of the Bible?
3. God used David's many years of suffering from Saul and Abner to teach David to rely on God and seek peace. How has God turned the hard times of your life into good years that changed your character and walk with Jesus for the better?
4. Abner was insulted when Ish-Bosheth called him out for sleeping with his father's concubine. Is there a time when your ego got in the way and kept you from listening to truthful words you needed to hear because they came from someone you didn't respect?
5. Abner brought the northern kingdom to David to spite Ish-Bosheth. Abner did the right thing for the wrong reason. How have you seen God take a leader's evil plans and use them for God's good purposes? (If you are stuck, think about the crucifixion of Jesus)
6. David may have personally struggled with Abner because he was responsible for so much suffering in his life. Why was David able to put aside his personal grievances to work with Abner? What does this teach us about working for peace even when the people we work with are distasteful and have the wrong motives?
7. David threw a feast for Abner when he came. Why did he do that? What does this teach us about practical ways to work for peace with difficult people?
8. How did Joab's obsession with revenge affect everyone around him? What does this teach us about the way our anger and lack of forgive affect others?
9. On the cross, Jesus took the initiative to bring us peace with God. He worked hard for peace as He suffered for our sins. Now that Jesus had given us peace with God, he has also given us the ability to forgive and extend peace to others. Is God prompting you to take the initiative and work for peace with someone today?