

2 Samuel 4 — Wait For The Lord

March 26, 2023

Good morning CrossWinds! My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. At CrossWinds, we are about “Reaching People With Jesus.” As a church family, we look for ways to build relationships in our community so we can tell people about Jesus. Let me tell you one of the fun ways that is happening on the Spencer Campus.

Does anyone like Chinese food? One of the families at the Spencer Campus loves Chinese. They have a special Chinese restaurant where they like to eat. The young Chinese couple that owns the restaurant has a boy who is often seen at the restaurant with his mother. The couple from CrossWinds has a son who is the same age as the young Chinese boy. That kicked off a friendship between this couple and the young Chinese couple that owns the restaurant. That led to the young boys getting together to play.

Then the couple at our Spencer Campus asked this the Chinese boy and his mother if they would like to visit the Spencer Campus on Sunday. They said yes. There was one problem. The Chinese mother can barely speak English, but they had an idea. In the back of the worship space, this couple is using a translator app on their phone to translate Pastor Jordan’s sermon into Chinese as he teaches. This way, the young mother can hear the good news of Jesus in her native tongue on Sunday morning. Isn’t this great? The young Chinese mother and her son have consistently attended the Spencer campus for almost two months.

This all began when a family on the Spencer Campus was friendly to the woman serving them food at a local Chinese restaurant. As a church, “Reaching People With Jesus” can happen any time we take the time to build relationships with people in our community. You never know where God will take those friendships.

This morning, our study is in 2 Samuel 4. Take out your outlines, phone Bibles, or paper Bibles.

Background

Since some of you are returning after being gone for the winter, let me take a moment to catch everyone up on what happened in recent weeks. The book of 1 Samuel is the story of Saul, Israel’s first king, and David, the nation’s second king. Saul didn’t obey God, so he was quickly rejected by God. God then chose young David to be king while Saul was still on the throne. Saul didn’t like a rival king God anointed. He was jealous of David and many times tried to kill David. After nine chapters of David running for his life, Saul died in battle with the Philistines.

Knowing the path to the throne was open, David asked God if he was to return to Israel. God told him to return. The southernmost tribe in Israel, the tribe of Judah, recognized him as king. The northern 11 tribes did not. King Saul’s old army general, a man by the name of Abner, became the one in charge of those tribes. Five years into his reign, Abner installed the one remaining son of King Saul as king over the northern kingdom. His name was Ish-Bosheth. Saul’s other three sons died defending him in battle. Ish-Bosheth wasn’t a real king. He was a puppet king. Abner was still in charge.

Soon after setting Ish-Bosheth as king, Abner and Ish-Bosheth went on the offensive. They started a civil war against Judah, the southernmost tribe, where David reigned as king. That initial attack did not go well. Ish-Bosheth and Abner lost badly. Over the next two years of civil war, Abner and Ish-Bosheth in the north grew steadily weaker while David in the south grew stronger.

Last week, as the northern kingdom began to fail, we saw Abner, king Saul's former army general in the north, defect to David in the south. Before he defected, he brokered a peace treaty putting all 12 tribes under David's rule. When Abner arrived in Hebron to meet with David, after the meeting, he was unexpectedly assassinated by David's general, a man named Joab. As we pick up our study in 2 Samuel 4, the nation is in a precarious position.

Ish-Bosheth is still king in the north. David is king in the south. The brokered peace deal by Abner is in question because of his assassination. Ish-Bosheth has not stepped down from the throne to reunite the nation. What will happen next? What is the next step to stop the civil war and unite the nation? David doesn't know. There are no good options in front of him? He couldn't march his troops north and attack Ish-Bosheth to take him off the throne, but that would reignite civil war. David felt stuck with no good options in front of him.

Maybe you have found yourself in the same place. Are there times when you are not sure which way to turn? You aren't sure what to do because there are no good options on the table? Maybe for you, it is a difficult marriage. You can't divorce, and you fight all the time. What should you do? Maybe it is a difficult work environment. You don't like your work, but you can't leave your work. What

should you do? Maybe for you, it is a tough legal situation. How do you defend yourself when you don't have any good options?

In Psalm 37, David wrote about what we are to do when there are no good options in front of us. Psalm 37 tells us to pray, trust, wait on the Lord, and avoid sinful choices to get good results when we have no good ways to turn. Let me read you a few verses from Psalm 37, and you will see what I mean.

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Psalm 37:5–7 (ESV)

When there is no god-honoring way to move forward, pray about things and trust God to make a way. David needed to listen to his own words in 2 Samuel 4. With Ish-Bosheth still on the throne and the peace plan stalled, all David could do was pray, trust, and wait. Let's see what happens.

Panic At Mahanaim

When Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed. 2 Samuel 4:1 (ESV)

When Ish-Bosheth had Abner defect to David and work to bring the northern 11 tribes to David, he was depressed and stressed. Now he hears that Abner was assassinated in Hebron. At this point, Ish-Bosheth does not appear to know the details of the assassination and why Abner was killed. He just knows Abner was killed by Joab when he tried to defect. Will Joab and his men continue working north, killing everyone who was part of Abner and Ish-Bosheth's kingdom? Ish-Bosheth was wondering if his days and hours would be short.

With the world coming down around him, it says Ish-Bosheth's courage failed. The literal Hebrew is "his hands fell down." It is a picture of a boxer in a

fight who becomes so discouraged and defeated that they put their hands down in the middle of the fight and take a pounding because they completely give up. Ish-Bosheth has no fight left in him. He lost all his courage. Without Abner to help him, he couldn't do anything.

We also read that all of Israel was dismayed. One scholar says a better translation than dismayed would be the word terrified. Everyone in the northern 11 tribes was in complete panic, not just because Abner was dead, but because Ish-Bosheth turned out to be a complete coward.

While studying, I ran across something John Calvin said about this verse that I thought was helpful.

Ish-Bosheth and his followers show us how easily overthrown are the wicked who seem to pose a deadly threat to God's people. Let us not doubt, when we see the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, that it will take nothing to make them a broken people, who do not know which way to turn because they do not have God on their side and they can not call on him. — John Calvin

When the civil war began in Israel two years before this, it was 11 tribes against one. Abner knew he was rebelling against God's will and God's designated king. Ish-Bosheth knew the same thing. David was to be the next king. God had spoken that. Abner and Ish-Bosheth just didn't want to listen. Over two years, God slowly crippled the strength of the northern kingdom while growing the strength of David's kingdom. God slowly turned the northern kingdom into a broken and weak one while strengthening David's kingdom. There was not much hope for Abner and Ish-Bosheth. They couldn't call on God's help because God was not on their side. They were living in disobedience to God's word. David was different. There were times when he was at the end of his rope, but he could call on God. God sustained him in his darkest moments and carried

him through. Abner and Ish-Bosheth didn't have that help. God was working against them, not for them.

This is true today. When we see people in powerful positions that are far from God and they are about evil work and sinful schemes, our heart breaks. While those with sinful motives are in a position of strength, we often see Christians and the church in a place of weakness. We must remember that right now God may have his people and his church in a place of weakness, but he is on the side of His church. He has promised to care for his church and bring his church home to glory. God has promised that one day God's kingdom will come, and His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. God will have no trouble taking the enemies of his church and making them weak and broken people, just like he did for the northern kingdom of Israel.

If you do not have God on your side, you can not turn to him for help. We can turn to God for help. We may call on God in hard times. Even if God does not take us out of our difficult situations and we face certain death, we do not face death as a defeat but as the moment of our greatest victory through Jesus who brings us home to be with God.

Remember that those apart from Christ, who seem to be in such powerful positions, are easily overthrown by God because they do not have God's help when the bottom drops out of their world, just Abner and Ish-Bosheth didn't have God's help when they needed God's help.

Ish-Bosheth's Two Men

The writer of 2 Samuel wants us to understand how weak Ish-Boseth's hold on power has become, especially after Abner's departure and death. Ish-Boseth's hopes lay with two men.

Now Saul's son had two men who were captains of raiding bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon a man of Benjamin from Beeroth (for Beeroth also is counted part of Benjamin; the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been sojourners there to this day). 2 Samuel 4:2-3 (ESV)

Ish-Bosheth had two men working for him that were captains of raiding bands. These are the snatch-and-grab guys. They were purse snatchers and car thieves. These are Ish-Bosheth's best hope to hold onto power. They are car thieves, not soldiers. That is not impressive.

We are given an unusually detailed account of their family, tribe, and hometown. Why all the family backgrounds? They were from the city of Beeroth. That city had a curious history, which explains why all this detail was needed. In the days of Joshua, the original inhabitants of Beeroth joined forces with the Gibeonites to trick Joshua into not destroying them. They came to Joshua claiming to come from a distant city and that wanted to make peace with Israel. Joshua made peace with them. In truth, they were not from a distant city. They were Israel's neighbors who tricked them into making a peace treaty. Joshua honored the treaty, and they were spared in Joshua's conquest of the Promised Land. Here we learn that the original Beerothites, fled to Gittaim. This happened when King Saul broke this peace treaty and attempted to annihilate them. We will read more about this later. Rimmon, and his sons did not originally live in this town. They were from the tribe of Benjamin and were part of Saul's group of

Benjamites that drove out the Beerothites out of their city and took over their land.

This is a long way of saying that even though Rimmon, and his sons came from a distant location, the town of Beeroth, they were from the tribe of Benjamin, just like Saul and Ish-Bosheth. They were Ish-Bosheth's relatives. These guys came from Ish-Bosheth's bloodline. This means you would expect these guys to be super loyal. They were family. As we will see, that is not what happens.

After these guys, all was left in Saul's family was Mephibosheth. The other three sons of Saul died on Mt. Gilboa defending Saul their father.

Mephibosheth

Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth. 2 Samuel 4:4 (ESV)

We do not know where this boy was when this happened, but the news of the death of his father, grandfather, and uncles by the Philistines on Mt. Gilboa was shocking. Saul's hometown of Gibeah was 50 miles away from Gilboa. The news of the Philistines plan to destroy Saul, his sons, and his family put Saul's hometown in a panic. Everyone ran for their life. When this happened, Mephibosheth was five. He either fell or his nurse dropped him while running for her life. As a result of that fall, he was paralyzed from the hip down. This accident happened 7 years prior. At this time, Mephibosheth was 12 years old and unable to walk or stand. We will learn much more about him later in this book. The reason he is introduced to us is so we know that Saul's family was reduced to Ish-Bosheth and one grandson who was a 12-year-old cripple named

Mephibosheth. This little guy was not in any position to be the next king. He was too weak and too young. There was not much hope for Saul's family line. God crippled Saul's family to remove them as rivals to David for the throne.

Ish-Bosheth's Death

Now we return to Rechab and Baanah, Ish-Bosheth's relatives, the two raiders. How much help will these men be now that Abner was gone?

Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out, and about the heat of the day they came to the house of Ish-bosheth as he was taking his noonday rest. 2 Samuel 4:5 (ESV)

They reached Ish-Bosheth's house at the perfect time, right when he was taking his well-known afternoon nap.

And they came into the midst of the house as if to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach.... 2 Samuel 4:6a (ESV)

These were Ish-Bosheth's relatives. Nobody suspected anything. They appear to be getting wheat from the storage room inside the house. Once inside the home, they carried out the real reason they came, which was to assassinate Ish-Bosheth in his sleep.

Interestingly, there are parallels. Last week, two brothers, Joab and Abishai, assassinated Abner. Now two brothers Rechab and Baanah assassinate Ish-Bosheth. They assassinate him with a gut wound, which was the same way Asahel, Abner, and now Ish-Bosheth die.

The Septuagint has some details that are not in the original Hebrew manuscripts. The ESV includes this as a footnote in your Bible. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament used at the time of Jesus for Jews who spoke Greek but were rusty on their Hebrew. The Septuagint helped

them read their Bible in the common language of their day. It is unlikely these words were in the original Hebrew manuscripts, but they may have been a true part of the story, or the Septuagint wouldn't have added them as commentary.

And behold, the doorkeeper of the house had been cleaning wheat, but she grew drowsy and slept. So Rechab and Baanah his brother slipped in. - Septuagint

In other words, for being king of the northern 11 tribes, Ish-Bosheth's kingdom was so weak that the only person working security was a woman who also served as the cook. She was not good security because she was asleep when Rechab and Baanah arrived.

...Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 2 Samuel 4:6b (ESV)

Their assassination was carried out without a hitch. This moment is the pivotal event of this chapter and for all chapters 2 to 4. Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, the rival king, is finally no longer in power. The moment has arrived. All opposition to David's kingship is gone.

In Hebrew, when they want to emphasize something, one of the ways they emphasize something important is they repeat what they said, but they add additional detail. That is normal. We do the same thing in English. When we want to emphasize something to our children, we repeat ourselves. We will see important moments highlighted by verses repeating themselves a few times in 2 Samuel.

The next verse repeats the last verse. It reads like a misprint. It is not a misprint. It is a point of emphasis.

When they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and put him to death and beheaded him... 2 Samuel 4:7a (ESV)

So they didn't just kill him on his bed, but they took off his head and kept it as a souvenir.

As we look at this, there are many lessons, but let's just look at one. Ish-Bosheth, just like Abner, knew that God said David would be king. Just as Abner fought against God's word for years. Ish-Bosheth fought against God's clearly revealed word for the last two years. Abner eventually changed sides and defected to David, albeit for the wrong reasons. Ish-Bosheth refused to step aside even though he knew what he was doing was wrong. As a result, for two years, God slowly crumbled Ish-Bosheth's kingdom, weakening it first in the civil war, then by the defection of Abner. Remember Ish-Bosheth was reduced to the woman who cooks running security and two thugs instead of trained soldiers. God has broken him but he refused to repent. Finally, God took him off the throne with his death.

Isn't this the way God works with us? Sometimes we know God's words and ways, but we rebel and do our own thing. We go our own way. God has a way of slowly humbling us and breaking us. He cripples us trying to bring our heart to the point of repentance and turning to him.

Has anybody been there? As God puts his people through that crippling process to bring them to repentance, the danger of not repenting is that God may say enough is enough. The wages of sin are death. For Ish-Bosheth, that is what happened. What a great reminder that when God is breaking us and humbling us to bring us back to him, it is important to realize he loves us and wants us to repent. It is important to listen.

...They took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night, 2 Samuel 4:7b (ESV)

These raiders took Ish-Bosheth's head and went south into the Jordan Valley traveling by night. Where were they going?

and brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron. And they said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring." 2 Samuel 4:8 (ESV)

This sounds good, but it is not good. They begin by calling David the king. Like Abner, these guys defected to David. The proof of their switching sides was the bloody head of Ish-Bosheth they carried with them. These brothers put a spin on their message.

They thought Saul was David's enemy because Saul tried to take David's life. They figured David would also consider Ish-Bosheth his enemy because he kicked off a bloody civil war. They were partially right. Saul did want David dead. Ish-Bosheth considered David his enemy, but David never sought the death of Saul or any of his sons. David had always gone out of his way to be at peace with them in spite of their hatred of him.

As we learned last week, David was a different kind of king. He was always seeking peace between people, not a conflict between people.

There is an interesting application that stuck out to me. People can call us their enemies, but we don't need to call them our enemies. We can be committed to loving our enemies and doing good to our enemies, even when they are committed to doing evil toward us. It reminds me of how Jesus and Paul told us to treat our enemies.

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Luke 6:35 (ESV)

To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Romans 12:20 (ESV)

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44 (ESV)

While Saul sought David's life, David never sought Saul's life. David, as a righteous king, refused to return evil for evil. He refused to kill Saul even though Saul was trying to kill him. He refused to go out of his way to kill Ish-Bosheth, even though Ish-Bosheth kicked off a civil war against him. He would do good to his enemies and trust the Lord with the outcome.

What a great application for us. A righteous man or woman does good for their enemies and trusts the Lord with the outcome. Even if someone calls us their enemy, we can refuse to call them our enemy.

Then they presented Ish-Bosheth's head to David as a gift from the Lord, saying, “The Lord has given vengeance.” Here is something interesting. These guys tried to justify their murder of Ish-Bosheth by claiming they were God's hands at work, giving vengeance for David against Saul, who tried to take his life.

While God did judge Ish-Bosheth for his sin of refusing to relinquish the throne, that didn't justify Ish-Bosheth's murder. These two brothers were guilty of murder, even if they felt it was murder for the right reasons because a stubborn man refused to align himself with God's will and give up the throne. They murdered Saul's son while he slept on his bed. That was evil. It was wrong. Just

as David mourned Saul's death and Abner's death, even though they were his enemies, he mourned for Ish-Bosheth's death.

God uses the acts of wicked men to advance his purposes, but the wicked acts of sin people are still sinful choices, and they will be judged by God for those choices, even if their sinful choice seems to have achieved a good result. It is never right to try and achieve good results in a sinful way. Yes, David should be the king. Yes, Ish-Bosheth refused to step down. They still had no right to murder him.

Think about Jesus. Judas betrayed Jesus. He is responsible for his sinful choice to condemn an innocent man. Speaking of the severity of that choice, the Bible says it would have been better if he was not born. Yet God still used Judas' sinful choice as how Jesus would end up on the cross to die for our sins. Yet, those who sent Jesus to the cross are still responsible for their sin.

A righteous person will not try to achieve good results in sinful ways. A righteous person will only achieve good results in a god-pleasing way. If there is no god-honoring way, that is when God's people wait, pray, and trust in God to make a way.

A Message From the King

But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity, 2 Samuel 4:9 (ESV)

David was not happy. David reminded them it is the Lord who saved his life from every adversity. Back in 1 Samuel, we saw God save David from the paw of the lion and the bear. God saved David from Goliath and many other adversaries.

David didn't need assassins to kill Ish-Bosheth to get him the kingdom in an evil way. It was hard, but he could wait. God would get him the kingdom in his timing and his way without sin. All David needed to do was trust in the Lord and wait. God's people never need to make a sinful choice to achieve a good result.

This is a great lesson for us. God knows his plans for our life. He will get us where he wants us to be in his timing and his way. We do not need to cheat or take any underhanded ways to get a good thing. All we need to do is focus on doing the right thing and waiting for God to take care of the right results. They may not be as soon as we want, but they will come. John Calvin said something good about this verse.

Whenever we are tempted to evil under the excuse of ridding ourselves of worry or anguish, or of having remedy for our own troubles, let us remember, has not God taken care of us up to now? Since God has been so merciful to us, and we have been saved by his hand so many times, should we abandon our trust in him now? - John Calvin

If God has been so faithful to us and cared for us in every adversity and trial, let us not abandon him now in the adversity and trials we face today. Let us keep trusting him. Let us not use evil or underhanded ways to achieve the right result. Let us not cheat on our taxes because God has promised to provide for all our needs if we do what is right. Let us not cheat on an exam since God has provided to get us where he wants us to be if we study our hardest and do our best.

The reason David never tried to kill Saul, Abner, or Ish-Bosheth is that he didn't need to resort to sin to get the throne. David knew he didn't need to lift a finger against them. All he had to do was trust God and let him take care of

getting David where he wanted him to be. Look how we see David trusting God in prior passages and refusing to do evil to get the throne.

May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.” 1 Samuel 24:15 (ESV)

David refused to get even with a person who hurt him. He left it in God’s hands to judge for him and deliver him.

The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the LORD gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the LORD’s anointed. 1 Samuel 26:23 (ESV)

David knew God rewards people for doing the right thing and faithfully trusting in their Savior. That is why he refused to put his hand out against Saul. No matter what Saul did to him, David did good to Saul and trusted God to take care of him.

when one told me, ‘Behold, Saul is dead,’ and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. 2 Samuel 4:10 (ESV)

This situation with these brothers reminds David of the Amalekite who came to David in 2 Samuel 1 from the battlefield after Saul lost his life. The Amalekite claimed he killed Saul and brought David the king’s crown and armband. We learned that the Amalekite embellished his story a bit. In truth, he didn’t kill Saul. He found Saul dead on the battlefield and took his crown and armband to David.

The Amalekite claimed he killed Saul because he was trying to get a reward from David for killing his enemy. He thought David would be pleased to have someone kill his enemy. At that time, David killed the Amalekite because there was no reason for him to put his hand out against God’s king and take his

life. God would get David the kingship without the need for someone to murder Saul. David saw a parallel between Rechab and Baanah to the same situation with the Amalekite seven years before.

Rechab and Baanah thought they would be heroes for killing Ish-Bosheth.

David saw them as murderers.

How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and destroy you from the earth?" 2 Samuel 4:11 (ESV)

Ish-Bosheth hadn't done anything to them to deserve death. He was just asleep in his bed. This was a cowardly and wicked deed on the part of these men.

And David commanded his young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hanged them beside the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron. 2 Samuel 4:12 (ESV)

David hung the bodies of these guys as billboards in the town square to make the message clear. David is not the kind of king who celebrates evil, even if you think you have done evil for the right reasons. The only way for God's people to achieve God's goals when they are stuck with no good options in front of them is to pray, wait, and trust the Lord for God to make a way. God will make a way in his time. Righteous men do not advance God's kingdom in sinful ways. That was true then. It is true now.

What was left of Ish-Bosheth's head was given an honorable burial.

There are a number of lessons for us in this chapter.

Applications

1. **Avoid sinful choices to achieve good goals.** When we think of a good thing we can do, but it involves a sinful choice that is never God's way. Most of us are not tempted to assassinate somebody to bring about the kingdom of David. We are tempted to cheat on an exam to get better grades. We are tempted not to report all of our taxes. We are tempted to date a non-Christian because we are lonely. That is the wrong way to get the right results. That is not the way God's kingdom works.

It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right. Proverbs 16:12–13 (ESV)

2. **While people are fully responsible for their sinful choices, God overrules sinful choices and incorporates them as part of His good plan to establish His kingdom.** This is a mind-bender. In God's infinite wisdom, while not being responsible for sin, God incorporates the sinful actions of people into his good plans. They are sinful actions that he hates and will judge. The murder of Ish-Bosheth by Rechab and Baanah was used by God to clear the path to put David into power, but they were still responsible for their sin and died for their sin. In the same way, the sin of Judas put Jesus on the cross, where he died for our sins, but Judas was still responsible for betraying Christ.

...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. Acts 2:23 (ESV)

3. **When there is no god-honoring way forward, God calls us to pray, trust, and wait.** There was nothing David could do with Ish-Bosheth in power. As

David wrote in Psalm 37:7, when there is no good way forward, we are to pray, wait, trust, and avoid sin. God will eventually make a way. Just as it was God's responsibility to remove the obstacles that kept David from the throne, it is God's responsibility to remove any obstacles that keep us from the work he has given us to do.

Wait for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off. Psalm 37:34 (ESV)

- 4. God extends severe mercy. Sometimes He cripples His people to turn them back to Him.** Abner, Ish-Bosheth, and others in the northern kingdom didn't want David to be their king. God, in his mercy, slowly weakened Saul's house and crippled Saul's family to bring God's people to the point that the only place left to look was David as their king. This is called God's harsh mercy. In God's mercy, God crippled Saul's family and the northern kingdom so they would be forced to turn to David, who is the one God chose to save them. In a similar way, when we wander away from God, he may choose to cripple us. He takes away our comforts and supports so we stop looking to everything else in our life for significance, and we start turning to Jesus, who is the only one that can save us. This morning, maybe you are here and you are facing a time of severe mercy. God has brought you into a hard season of life. That is not because he hates us. That is because he loves us. When our life falls apart, we turn to Jesus, the only one who can hold us together.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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