

## INTRODUCTION

Hey, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 2 Samuel chapter 3.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to 2 Samuel 3,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
  - under every single chair.
  - You'll find 2 Samuel 3 on page **256**.

## INTRODUCTION

I think sometimes we read portions of the Bible and we ask,

- *"Why is this even in here?"*

That probably will happen as we look at today's text.

**But this carries the presupposition that the Bible was written ABOUT US.**

And that's a poor view of the scriptures.

- We think it's ABOUT US.

**But our Bible is made up of 66 books...**

- **Inspired by the Holy Spirit...BUT...**

- written BY real people,

- FOR real people,

- in a specific CONTEXT...

- **and THEN...it's preserved FOR US...**

- **to see WHO GOD IS and WHAT GOD'S LIKE.**

So, that's why there's names and places we can't pronounce.

- And that's why, sometimes, it can feel very difficult...
- to apply certain portions of the scriptures to your life.

## TRANSITION

And today,

- there is some application,
- but I'm gonna have to do some work to get us there.

So, I want to walk us through some events...

- that you may have never heard preached before...
- we normally just kinda fly over these stories.

But in the second half of the sermon there is application.

But let's read the text as it stands,

- and not try to force this to be ABOUT US.
  - Let's see what's here first.

## CONTEXT

So, let me catch us all up to where we are in the story.

- King Saul,
  - the first King of Israel, is dead.
- David,
  - the man after God's own heart,
  - has been crowned King over Judah,
  - one of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Ish-bosheth,
  - Saul's fourth and only remaining son,
  - is crowned as King over the remaining eleven tribes,
    - but his reign is more of a puppet regime.
- Because Abner,
  - Saul's right-hand-man is really pulling the strings.

Well, Ish-bosheth angers Abner,

- and so Abner flip-flops allegiances,
- and asks David for a covenant of protection...
- if he will help David take kingship over all twelve tribes of Israel.

And that's where we pick it up in 2 Samuel 3:20.

## 2 SAMUEL 3:20-21

[20] When Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. [21] 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." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

### EXPLAIN: PEACE

So, Abner comes to David with only 20 men...

- because he isn't worried.

There's a treaty now...

- and so, the text says **Abner came**...
- and then **went in peace**.

But then David's right hand man, a guy named Joab, shows up.

Uh oh... verse 23:

## 2 SAMUEL 3:23-24

[23] 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." [24] 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?

## EXPLAIN: JOAB

So, Joab is upset...

- that David is dealing with Abner,
- and that he let him go in peace.

But do you remember the real reason why Joab hates Abner so much?

Last week,

- in the beginning of the civil war between Judah and Israel,
- Joab's youngest brother,
  - a man named Asahel,
    - who was quite the runner.
  - had been killed by Abner.
    - Now, Abner killed Asahel in battle,
    - so that was a just killing.
- But there's a blood feud between Joab and Abner now.

So, what will Joab do? Verse 26:

## 2 SAMUEL 3:26-27

[26] 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. [27] And when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the stomach, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

## EXPLAIN: MURDER

So, Joab goes behind David's back here.

- He sends messengers to Abner,
  - who had left in peace.
- And so, Abner returns...
  - Joab pulls him aside...
  - and stabs him in the stomach.

Abner is murdered.

- And while Abner killing Asahel was a just killing.
- Joab murdering Abner was unjust.

## 2 SAMUEL 3:28-30

[28] 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.

[29] 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!" [30] So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.

## EXPLAIN: DAVID'S RESPONSE

So, David's like, "*Are you kidding me, Joab!?!*"

- *Abner had immunity.*
- *He was handing over the other eleven tribes of Israel.*
- *I was finally going to receive all that God promised."*

And David publicly washes his hands of this.

But just note:

- David doesn't REALLY do anything about it.
  - It's a slap on the wrist.
- Joab has just murdered a man in cold-blood.
  - By the Law of Moses he should be executed.
- But David gives Joab a pass.

This is unjust, just so we're clear.

This isn't how the king is supposed to behave.

- He is supposed to be a man of justice.

And then the rest of this chapter is about the memorial service for Abner.

Let's move to chapter 4, verse 1:

## **2 SAMUEL 4:1**

[1] When Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed.

### **EXPLAIN: ISH**

So, Ish-bosheth has lost his right-hand man, and he freaks out. Plus, all of Israel was dismayed.

- It's like they knew that Abner was the force behind Ish-bosheth,
- and that now they're left with basically an empty suit.

But in the next verses we are introduced to Saul's crippled grandson...

- Mephibosheth, who will come into the story in a few chapters.

And then to two of Ish-bosheth's men...

- who take matters into their own hands.
- Look at verse 5:

## 2 SAMUEL 4:5-7a

[5] 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. [6] And they came into the midst of the house as if to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. [7] 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.

### EXPLAIN: DEAD

So, Ish-bosheth, the last son of Saul, is dead.

- He's stabbed in the stomach,
- and beheaded by his own men.
  - They know he's no king,
  - and now that Abner is dead,
  - and so, they cut their losses...literally.

## 2 SAMUEL 4:7b-8

They took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night, [8] 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."

So, they bring Ish-bosheth's head to David, and essentially say,

- *"Here you go. Now you can become king!"*

But look at verse 9:

## 2 SAMUEL 4:9-12

[9] 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, [10] 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. [11] 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?" [12] 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.

### ILLUSTRATION: VEGGIE TALES

You know, my daughter has a lot...

- of children's Bibles...
  - and Bible storybooks....
  - and videos telling Bible stories, and the like...
- and I've never seen these chapters in any of those!
  - Cutting of heads and hands and feet...
  - and hanging dismembered bodies on walls...
- there are no cartoon vegetables covering that stuff!

No, this is gruesome. It's like a horror movie!

## TRANSITION

And that's our text for today. I hope you're hanging with me still. But this is actually a very simple story.

- This is the story of how David goes...
- from being the king over one tribe, Judah...
- to how he will become king over all twelve-tribes of Israel,
  - as we'll see next week.

But it's history. It's telling the story of how these events took place.

- Abner is murdered by Joab.
  - David neglects justice.
- Ish-bosheth is murdered by his own men.
  - And then David executes justice...
  - just like he did in Ziklag in chapter 1.
    - But then David has their hands and feet cut off!

So, there you go.

How do we apply that?

## MAIN POINT: BIBLICAL VIOLENCE

Well, what I would like to do with the rest of our time today,

- is to zoom out,
- and try to address something that seems to be looming...
  - all through these chapters,
  - and really this entire book,
  - and frankly, many of the books in the Bible.

And it's this question:

HOW COULD GOD BLESS SUCH VIOLENT PEOPLE?

We're gonna talk about **SLIDE BIBLICAL VIOLENCE**

- I mean, this is some crazy stuff, y'all!
- How in the world could God bless this stuff?

Remember last week,

- when talking about how some people point to polygamy...
  - as a reason why the Bible cannot be trusted?

Well, the violence in the Old Testament...

- is a HUGE barrier for many people...
- when it comes to trusting God's Word.
  - Why does it seem like God, in the Old Testament,
    - has a disregard for human lives?
  - Why does it seem like he blesses actions...
    - that we would consider absolutely abhorrent today?

HOW COULD GOD BLESS SUCH VIOLENT PEOPLE?

Well, I've got two points that might help us with this question.

### POINT 1: BLINDSPOTS

First, I want to start addressing this question by talking about:

- **SLIDE BLINDSPOTS**

God has always used men and women with blindspots.

If you read the Bible, every single character was messed up.

- Adam and Eve...well, they kinda jacked this whole thing up.
- Abraham was a perpetual liar.
- Moses had an anger problem.
- David obviously had issues with women and with violence.
- And on and on I could go.

## APPLICATION: FALLS

Now, here's something I want us to apply to our worldview today:

- we shouldn't be shocked when the same things happen today.

I heard another preacher say this:

- even the best of men...
- are men at best.

You see, we are rarely incensed when we read of these Biblical characters.

But...when a modern leader falls,

- or messes up,
- or does something that lets us down...

Well, we often have the response:

- *"How could that happen!?!"*
- *How could a man or woman of God do such a thing?"*

And I think one of the answers is BLINDSPOTS.

- Even the best of men...
- are men at best.

It doesn't excuse sin...not at all...but it does explain some things.

And it is a good and Biblical thing to follow God's appointed leaders.

But anytime we put unhealthy focus on a leader God chooses to use.

- When we put our hope and trust in a leader...
- we are going to be let down.
  - Gosh, the closer you get to them,
  - the more you realize,
  - they're just like you.
    - Messed up,
    - weak,
    - struggling.

## APPLICATION: WE ALL

And oh, by the way, WE ALL HAVE BLINDSPOTS!

- This is why Ephesians 4 commands us...
- to walk patiently with one-another.

You know why I am going to be patient with you?

Because I need you to be patient with me!

- You're gonna need to be patient with me as your pastor,
  - cause I'm gonna let you down...
  - just like you're gonna let me down.
- If I haven't let you down yet,
  - it's just cause you haven't been here long enough...
  - or you haven't gotten close enough to me.

We need PATIENCE with one another...

cause WE ALL HAVE BLINDSPOTS...

- where we cannot see potential pitfalls
- and potential un-wise moves.

You're like, *"Well, I definitely don't have any blind-spots!*

- *I took the enneagram...*
- *and I'm in counseling...*
- *and I practice mindfulness...*
  - *and breathing...*
  - *and stretching...*
- *I'm very self-aware!"*

And good for you!

- But the fact that you think you don't...
- only proves that you do...
- because If you knew they existed...they wouldn't be blind spots!

## POINT 2: MIRROR

But let me add to that...

- We all have BLINDSPOTS...
- PLUS every TIME and AGE has its own BLINDSPOTS, too.

Here's where I want to make my second point about BIBLICAL VIOLENCE.

You see, we aren't supposed to look at the Bible...

- through a SLIDE MAGNIFYING GLASS
- but as a MIRROR.

See, we often read the Bible through a MAGNIFYING GLASS...

- which is a very common temptation...
  - and actually a quite popular thing to do...
  - in our day and age.

We are culturally obsessed...with this whole cancel culture phenomenon,

- where it's very cool to judge the past...
- through the lens of the present.

And when we judge those in the past through the lens of the present,

- whether that's 2000 years ago,
- or 200 years ago,
- or even just 20 years ago...
  - we arrogantly assume...
  - that if we had been living back then,
  - we wouldn't have done what they did.

But this is what C.S. Lewis calls, "*chronological snobbery.*"

- Looking back 2000, 200, or 20 years...
- through a MAGNIFYING GLASS...
- and making judgments.

But you see, in Matthew chapter 7, Jesus says these words:

## SLIDE MATTHEW 7:1

[1] “Judge not, that you be not judged.

Now, that doesn’t mean...

- we don’t make determinations...
- on whether things are right or wrong.

Not at all! VIOLENCE IS WRONG!

But what he’s saying is, “*don’t make a condemnation.*”

- We can determine if something is wrong...
- but we aren’t the ones to condemn.

When a building is condemned...it is declared “*unfit for use*”...

- and that’s not for us to judge of other people.

And here’s why.

## SLIDE MATTHEW 7:2-3

[2] For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. [3] Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

### EXPLAIN: MEASURE

So, when we look at historical OR modern-day figures,

- and we find ourselves wanting to condemn them...
  - to declare them “*unfit for use*”...
    - because of their actions...
- what we don’t realize is...
- we’re setting ourselves up...
- for God to do the same for us.

You see,

- we tend to judge others by their worst moments,
- and ourselves by our best moments.

But in doing so,

- we're looking through our magnifying glass,
- throwing condemnations around...

And if we do that...

- that's the measure with which we will be measured.

And listen, y'all... YOU DON'T WANT THAT!

- every single culture has BLINDSPOTS,
- and every single culture will be looked at by future cultures,
- through their **SLIDE MAGNIFYING GLASS** and judged.

## EXPLAIN: MIRROR

So, when we look at the Bible and ask,

- *"How could God bless that?"*
- *How could God bless that?"*

Really, the Bible isn't meant to be read this way.

**Rather, it's supposed to be a MIRROR.**

- **And when we read it we should ask the question,**
  - *"How could God bless me?"*
  - *How could God ever bless a person like me?"*

The Bible tells us who God is and what he's like...

but, the Bible also illuminates human sinfulness.

- It mirrors to us where we are out of line with God.
- It shows us that we are sick.

Think of the Bible as a diagnostic tool.

## ILLUSTRATION: MRI

So, two weeks ago I had an MRI scan on my ankle.

- I'm like to go for runs,
- but for the last couple months,
- I've been having some pain in my ankle...
  - and so...I ignored it...and just hoped it would go away.

Well, it didn't.

- And when the pain became so bad...
  - that I was, like, hobbling around my house...
  - even on days when I didn't run...
- I scheduled an appointment with my doctor.
  - I got an x-ray first,
  - and then an MRI.

And they found I have a bunch of arthritis in my foot and ankle.

So, apparently, I'm just getting old?

## APPLICATION

But here's where this comes back to the Bible...

- the X-Ray and the MRI are like the Scriptures.

They showed that I had a problem in my ankle.

- **The scan shows us what's wrong with us.**
- **It mirrors to us what's wrong with us.**

That's how we should approach these texts.

- Not just zooming in with our MAGNIFYING GLASS...
- to judge the actions of these ancient people.

No, we should be looking for reflections in our lives...

- where we might be sick,
- or sinning,
- or even blind to things.

Be careful not to judge the scriptures through the lens of modern thoughts.

- I too, have blindspots.
- I too, have things that someone, one day...
  - might look back on and say,
  - *"Are you kidding me?"*

- Maybe I should focus on the log in my eye?

- Maybe I should focus on my scan results?

- Maybe instead of asking, *"God, how could you bless that?"*

- I should ask, *"God, how could you bless me?"*

## CONCLUSION **BLANK SLIDE W/PADS**

So, listen, all this stuff...

- it's not to say that we don't look at what David...
- and the other men and women of the Bible did, and say,
  - *"Well, it must be ok!"*

No, not at all!

I am in no way condoning the violence of the Bible here,

- just like last week I wasn't condoning...
- the taking of multiple spouses.

And in fact,

- just like there were terrible consequences...
  - for the polygamy in the Bible...

- there will also be terrible consequences for the violence.
  - It's actually his multiple wives...
  - AND his pardon of Joab...
- that will lead to horrible consequences for King David.

## APPLICATION

Now, this whole sermon...

- could be an interesting thought exercise...
- where you say,
  - *"Ok, I think I get how to interpret and handle..."*
  - *some of the atrocities in the Bible a little better."*

But it would be a miss if we just stopped there.

Knowing that WE ALL HAVE BLINDSPOTS...

- What is your next step?
  - Have you been ignoring some sin in your life?
  - Have you been condemning with the Bible,
    - rather letting it do its work on you?

And listen, for some of you,

- you started working on your blindspots...
- last week or the week before.

This is actually the same application as the last two sermons.

- BURN THE SHIPS.
- STOP ALLOWING SIN IN YOUR LIFE.

So, if you're doing that stuff, yo, keep at it!

## ENDING

But, maybe you punted on the ship burning two weeks ago.

And maybe last week you started to feel some conviction...

- about seeds of sin...
- besetting sins...
  - but you didn't do anything about it!

But today,

- your scan is revealing the same thing!

And here's the truth...the scan can't cure you.

- If my ankle starts hurting again, my first response isn't,
  - "Well, I've gotta get back in that tube!"
  - I better get another scan!"

That's nonsensical!

- The scan can't heal my ankle.
  - I need to do something about it!

And so today,

- if you know there's something you need to do...
  - to confess...
  - to repent of...
  - to set fire and burn to the ground.
- Gosh, DO IT!
- Bring it to Jesus.

Stop it with these redundant scans...and do something about it.

We're here to help.

Let's pray.

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

## RESOURCES CONSULTED:

- Brown, Chris. *The Kingdom IS Coming*.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. Focus on the Bible Commentaries. 2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity.
- Osborne, Larry. *The Problem with Grace, Mercy, and Blindspots*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. The Second Book of Samuel.