

Introduction

(Image):

(Need): How do we react to a world filled with powerful wickedness? This is not a new question. Augustine wrote his famous book to deal with that topic.

(Subject): Last week we brought out that what we see is two kingdoms at play. A kingdom of God and a Kingdom of Man. We will go a little deeper into how we play out the kingdom of man in very real ways in our homes, but how Jesus releases us from the baggage and bondage into freedom in his kingdom.

(Text): 2 Samuel 3 and 4

Body

I. **God works providentially in the midst of people's sinfulness to bring about his kingdom.**

- a. The Kingdom God was building was Growing despite the resistance of man. (vv. 1-4)

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. – v. 1

- b. Abner, out of petty anger, decides to turn on Ish-bosheth (vv. 5-21)

While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul. 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?" 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." And Ish-bosheth could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him. 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." 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." - (vv.6-13)

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. 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." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace. (vv. 17-21)

- c. Joab out of vengeance and jealousy murders Abner, earning David's curse. (22-39)

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. 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. 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. 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!" So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon. (vv. 26-30)

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. 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!" (vv. 37-39)

- d. In Light of Abner's death, the kingdom of Israel realizes their weakness. (4:1)

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

- e. Two of Ish-bosheth's captains, brothers, murder their king believing that they will receive reward from David. (vv.2-8)

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. They took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night, 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." (vv. 7-9)

- f. David's response of justice to the murders of Ish-bosheth. (9-12)

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, 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. 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?" 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. (vv. 9-12)

II. Man Centered Ways We Deal with a Broken World

- a. We seek to elevate ourselves by bringing others down.
 - i. Abner's reaction after his pride was wounded. Take down the offender. Also Joab, probably taking out a rival.
 - ii. Gossip.
 - iii. Passive Aggressiveness.
 - 1. Sarcastic Remarks.
 - 2. It's so good that your so carefree, I wish I didn't care so much about others. s
- b. We seek to elevate ourselves by building a false reality of our own importance.

- i. Abner's view that he was the one that could transfer the kingdom by himself. Almost as if God really needed him. (notice that God did it without him)
 - ii. When our ego needs to have our importance recognized.
 - 1. Paul Miller in J-Curve.
 - 2. When not recognized by his bosses, he really wanted to find a way to bring into the conversation that the idea everyone was excited about was his idea.
 - iii. In ability to take criticism. The extreme reaction of Abner. Unable to be anything other than the hero of what is going on.
 - iv. Burning ourselves out through over work.
 - v. People Pleasing.
- c. Manipulative.
- i. This is the two assassins, thinking that they will get great reward, they switch sides, thinking a new master will bring them greater reward.
 - ii. Opportunism
 - iii. Seek to simply make relationships for purely self-centered purposes.
 - 1. In Some ways you could accuse David of this with Joab
 - 2. He doesn't Punish them, he curses them, but nothing else, because he needs them.
 - 3. Nothing wrong with networking, but do you only value people for what they can do for you???
 - iv. Let's see how people respond to me if this happens test how much people love me.
 - v. Become jealous and guard people from
- d. Bitterness
- i. Joab.
 - ii. A response of constant criticism. You are unhappy, No one seems to be listening to you, respecting your wisdom. In fact, may be a family member or coworker embarrassed you in front of others, or your and you will make sure everyone knows that you are not the problem.
 - iii. Sulking, withdraw.
 - iv. Holding a grudge.
- e. Natural behaviors in a broken world.
- i. Really easy to recognize in others, equally easy to be blind to these in ourselves.
 - ii. Hurt people hurt people, and often these are responses we have to hurt we have received.
 - iii. In many ways we are this way in responses to trauma or hardship. But, we have learned through the brokenness of the world how to respond.

III. A Response of Love.

- a. David Response to the appeal of the assassins (like the temptation of Satan) is of Worship.
 - i. God is in Control.

- ii. God is the only one who truly saves.
 - iii. God is worthy of trust.

- b. What David Needed was God, and because of God's grace, David had that. Thus the world had nothing to offer him.
 - i. David didn't need Abner, he didn't need the two assassins. He knew that God was his redeemer in EVERY adversity.
 - ii. This freed David to be able to love, to forgive, to trust to be reconciled with enemies. To see Good in others.
 - iii. Transformed by the Love of God David was enabled to be a reconciler and a peacemaker, not an opportunist.

- c. We long for freedom to deal with the brokenness of this world.
 - i. We long for a different way than the continual perpetuation of hurt people hurting people, who will in turn hurt people cycle. There is a different way, but it is not a new way, but the way made available to us through Jesus Christ.

 - ii. David didn't need others to go down to be lifted up, He was secure in God's Love, which freed him to love, to mourn, to forgive and not be threatened by rivals.
 - 1. Jesus who himself modeled this, he went low, to bring us all up. When we seek to satisfy ourselves in the love that comes to us by grace, we can also die for others, rather than need others to die for our elevation.

 - iii. David didn't have to create a false reality of his own importance. He was secure in God's love, which he knew was steadfast, which was merciful. That enabled him to submit to God's plan and God's timing.
 - 1. Freed by God's love, we can release ourselves from the need to be able to be justified by others to seek their approval, instead we can be humble and joyful in whatever season we are in. we are not undone by criticism.
 - 2. This releases us to accept our limitations, and rest in God, rather than what we can or cannot do. It free's us to not be superman or superwomen for our families, or work, our church.
 - 3. IT releases us from the tyranny of people pleasing.

 - iv. It frees us from Manipulation. We can trust that God is good and he will redeem us from every adversity.
 - 1. We are free to love people instead of use them. Love them sacrificially even.
 - 2. Yes, this is a broken and messy world. But, God is in the midst of the mess. His kingdom is coming, and it will not be stopped by the mess and the sinful manipulations of man.

 - v. It releases of from bitterness. Because, despite what has happened in our life, we can know a love that makes us dance for joy. This is a love that is so unwarranted that all we can say is we are blessed beyond measure.

- d. Responding to the soundtracks in our life.
 - i. You cannot change the brokenness of life. You cannot wrap yourself in bubble wrap. (notice what I didn't say was God finds a way to remove you from the brokenness of the world).
 - ii. Being aware of the soundtrack in our life that is responding to the brokenness of this world.
 - iii. Creating a gospel soundtrack to replace

Conclusion

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