

2 Samuel 2:18-23

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[0 : 00] Y'all going to be flipping in your Bibles to the book of 2 Samuel, chapter 2. I don't expect to be before you too long. We ain't got but a few verses we're going to read. But leading up to this, of course, you have the entire book of 1 Samuel.

In 1 Samuel, we see the rise and fall of King Saul. We also see the anointing of King David. 1 Samuel, though, is kind of peculiar because it begins on a sad note with a barren woman named Hannah that can't have children, and it ends on a sad note with the death of a king, King Saul. Now, Hannah, granted, she went on to have Samuel after she prayed and all. And we see the rise of Samuel in 1 Samuel as a prophet of God. We see Samuel go and anoint King David, the youngest of Jesse's sons.

And we see a lot of jealousy from Saul toward David. Saul being the physical king of Israel, but David being the real king, the one that God has chosen.

[1 : 20] If you recall in the Scriptures, God said Himself, In my wrath I gave Israel Saul. Because Israel wouldn't shut up about having a king. They wanted a king like the nations around them.

God said, No, I want to be your king. I want to be your leader. And they begged and begged and begged. And finally, in God's wrath, and that's Scripture, He gave them King Saul.

And King Saul started out in humility, but he fell in pride. He fell on Mount Gilboa by his own sword after a battle.

This brings us to 2 Samuel. That's 1 Samuel in a really condensed nutshell. 2 Samuel, we have, of course, the death of Saul in the last chapter of 1 Samuel.

And we see King David. And the beginning of his rise as king. He goes to Hebron. He's crowned king of Judah there. Not king of all of Israel, but king of Judah.

[2 : 18] And Isbatheth has taken Abner. Or Abner has taken Isbatheth, I should say. One of Saul's sons and made him king over Israel.

And there's a battle that takes place. It starts out kind of as a little contest. The two armies meet around a little pool. You read about this in the second chapter. But they meet at a pool.

And it turns into an all-out civil war between them. And that's where we find ourselves here in 2 Samuel. In this war, this battle that's taken place between Saul's people and David's people.

And we're going to read tonight about a man named Azahel. And it's a sad story that we read about Azahel. I don't know you people real well. But this is the message that I feel like the good Lord's laid on my heart to preach tonight.

So this is what we're going to preach. So 2 Samuel in the second chapter, starting at verse 18. It says, And there were three sons of Saruia there, Joab, Abishai, and Azahel.

[3 : 29] And Azahel was as light of foot as a wild row. And Azahel pursued after Abner. And in going, he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

Then Abner looked behind him and said, Art thou Azahel? And he answered, I am. And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to the right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armor.

But Azahel would not turn aside from following him. And Abner said again to Azahel, Turn thee aside from following me. Wherefore should I smite thee to the ground?

How then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? Howbeit he refused to turn aside.

Wherefore Abner, with the hindered end of the spear, smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him.

And he fell down there and died in the same place. And it came to pass that as many as came to the place where Azahel fell down and died, stood still.

[4 : 39] Back to verse 18. And there were three sons of Saruah there. Saruah is the sister of King David. Just to throw that out there.

There were three sons of Saruah there. Joab, Abishai, and Azahel. And Azahel was as light of foot as a wild roe.

So here again, we just read through this short account, just a handful of verses we read through here this evening about this man Azahel. And if you notice, it says he was as light on foot as a wild roe.

Azahel isn't introduced to us as someone of great wisdom. He isn't introduced to us as someone of great strength. He isn't introduced to us of any of these things.

But he's introduced to us as a man that is quick on his feet. He says he was as light on his foot as a wild roe. But folks, this is something that Azahel himself would have been very well aware of, how fast that he was, how quick he was on his feet, how he could get from point A to point B, quicker than more than likely any other man in this army, or in the army that he's fighting with here.

[5 : 57] Azahel is very well aware of this. And the rider was very well aware of this. And everyone around, evidently, would have been well aware of the quickness of Azahel.

But folks, what this story brings us to here is, it doesn't matter how swift we are. What matters is, what are we running after?

What are we going toward? He was running after Abner. We read here, it says, And Azahel pursued after Abner, and Azahel pursued after Abner, and in going he turned not to the right hand, nor to the left from following Abner.

So here's this man, that's as light on his feet as a wild robe, very quick on his feet, very fast, and he's running towards Abner. Abner, being a seasoned general in this army, is basically what Abner was.

He was a seasoned war veteran. He was a seasoned killer. He was a man of fighting. He was a man of battles. And this is the very one that Azahel has set his sights on.

[7 : 01] It says that he didn't look to the right. He didn't look to the left. He set his sights on Abner. And that's the way that he was going. There was no turning away from that.

And the scripture here says, In going, he turned not to the right hand, nor to the left from following Abner. So at first, this sounds like someone that has got their sights, they've got them set on a goal. It almost sounds commendable what Azahel is doing here. It sounds like he's focused on his target. But folks, he is focused upon the wrong target here. He is focused on the head of this army that he is fighting against.

And that's why Abner said what he did a couple of verses later. He says, turn to the side. Take one of these lesser people. In other words, fight somebody your own size.

You're running for the wrong reason. You're running the wrong way. Abner did not want to kill Azahel. Azahel. Abner obviously knew Joab, Azahel's brother, because he said, he said, why should I smite you?

[8 : 03] Or wherefore should I smite you? How could I ever look at your brother Joab in the face again if I do this thing? But here again in verse 19, Azahel pursued after Abner.

He pursued after him. In verse 18, we find that he was swift in his pursuit. That he would be swift in his pursuit. And in verse 19, we find that he didn't turn to the right hand nor to the left, but he continued to follow Abner.

And folks, if we're not real careful in our Christian walks, we will follow the wrong way. We'll follow the wrong path. We'll aim for the wrong target. There's many people that shoot for a target in ministry, whether it be pastoring, whether it be preaching, whether it be teaching, whether it be a deacon, whatever the case is, they're shooting for a target.

They've got a goal in mind, but they don't understand the cost of that goal. They don't understand the calling of that goal. They don't even have the calling. That's just what they want. And they are shooting for the wrong thing.

And if we shoot for the wrong target, we're running in the wrong direction after the wrong things, folks, this will be the ruin of us. If we are not careful in our walk with Almighty God, it will be our downfall.

[9 : 13] God help us to not be this way. God help us to seek God. God help us to seek God. When we find it in our minds, or in our hearts for that matter, what exactly it is that we want, let us pray unto God.

Let us ask God. Let us seek after God to see if that is truly what He wants for us. And if it is not what He wants for us, let us turn away from whatever this goal is that we've set for ourselves and pray unto God.

Seek after God. Pray time and time and time again unto God until He finally shows us what He has down the line for us. And then we can set our goals aright.

And we can set them true. And we can set them fresh. Verse 20, Then Abner looked behind him and said, Art thou asahel? And he answered, I am. Now I don't know exactly how this conversation would have happened in the middle of a battle with one man running after another man.

And it says, Abner looked behind him and asked a simple question, Art thou asahel? And asahel answered, I am. I don't know exactly how they went about having that conversation.

[10:19] Folks, that's not the point of this scripture, of this verse. And Abner looked behind him and said, Art thou asahel? And he answered, I am. There's recognition here.

Abner knew exactly who it was that was chasing him. So asahel had quite a name for himself. And folks, there's people out here, that's all they're seeking for themselves is a name.

Again, this man Asahel here, quick on his feet, light on his feet, has a wild robe, aiming for the general of this army, going in the direction of this general, going in the direction of what he saw as a prize.

But folks, he didn't understand the consequences. And too many times in our lives as Christians, we won't understand the consequences because we are so set on doing something.

We are so set on reaching a goal. And lost people, they're in worse shape than this. Lost people, they've got their goals set on money. They've got their goals set on fame.

[11:18] They've got their goals set on fortune or any other number of different things. And they've got it set on anything and everything other than Almighty God and the salvation of their eternal souls.

And they're running just like this man Asahel. They're running toward the wrong goal. They're running in the wrong direction. Running straight towards death and judgment just like Asahel was.

Asahel here, he had no idea what waited for him at the end of his path on this battlefield. No idea. He was so focused on glory. Imagine what he was thinking here.

Imagine what he was thinking. If I caught Abner, the general of this army, the leader of this army, and I can spoil him of his armor, and I can take it back to my people and show them what I have done.

Imagine the backpats that I will get. Imagine the praise that I will get that I took out Abner. That's exactly what I think this man Asahel was thinking here. And that's why he was so focused on Abner.

[12:23] Abner hadn't done anything that we can find in the scripture. He hadn't done anything personally to Asahel. Asahel just focused on him. But warning is given.

Praise God. Verse 21, And Abner said unto him, Turn thee aside to the right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armor.

But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. Folks, a warning went out from Abner, from this worldly general. Really? It went out to the man that was pursuing him.

Again, Abner did not want to kill him. But the warning went out. And folks, as children of God, if we're following the wrong thing, if we're looking for the wrong goal, God will send warning our way. God will send us warning. He'll send it in a sermon that pierces our heart. He'll send it in the voice of a parent or a child. He'll send it in a pang in our heart.

[13:25] He'll send it many different ways, but He will send warnings to let us know you're going the wrong way. You're pursuing the wrong goal. Seek after me. Look to me.

Look unto God. Look unto your Maker. God gives these warnings out to the saved, and He gives the warnings out to the lost. I don't think there's a person in hell today that died without a warning from Almighty God.

We've got Scripture. We've got preaching. We've got so many different avenues that God can reach the lost. And nowadays, it's all over the internet. You can find it on YouTube.

You can find it on Facebook. There's a blue billion copies of the Bible that are out there available. Man is without excuse for not knowing the Gospel or not heeding to the Gospel.

Not accepting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And that's what it boils down to. You either accept the Gospel or you reject the Gospel. There's two different types of people on the earth.

[14 : 28] There's saved people and there's lost people. There's those that are in the dark and those that have been brought into God's marvelous light. That's the only two people that there are two types of people that are on planet earth.

Here, Abner said to them, Turn! Turn aside! Turn to your right hand! Turn to your left hand! Quit following after me! And even given the invitation, Take one of these other people.

Take a lesser person. In other words, you don't want to pick this fight with me. House of hell. Because you're going to lose. And folks, when we tempt God, when we go running after the wrong thing, and we're going in the wrong direction, and if you're a child of God, you'll know that you are. the same warnings go out to us. The same warnings go out to us. I don't know any of your hearts, but if you're here lost or not, you're being warned right now.

And you've been warned in the past more than likely. Turn aside! Turn aside! Turn unto God! Look unto God! Look unto Christ and have life!

[15 : 41] Look unto Christ and live! I'm sure you've all heard Brother Vern say, look unto Christ and live many times. And I exhort you to do the same thing.

Look unto Christ and have life. Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left and lay thee hold on one of the young men and take thee his armor. But Hossahel would not turn aside from following him.

The warning went out, but Hossahel didn't heed to it. And again, all Abner was doing, he was trying to spare his life. He was saying, you don't want to do this.

Stop pursuing this glory. Stop pursuing what you want. He knew Hossahel being the youngest of these brothers that we were introduced to in verse 18 would be the least experienced.

And here he was picking on a seasoned general. And Abner did not want to kill him. He did not want to thrust him through with the spear. Verse 22, And Abner said again to Hossahel, Turn thee aside from following me.

[16 : 48] Wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? How then should I hold up my face to Joab, thy brother? Two warnings have gone out. Really, three have gone out.

Because he says, turn aside. Then he invites him to take someone of a lesser stature, lesser status for that matter. And then he tells him again, turn thee to the side.

Turn around. In other words, repent is what Abner was screaming to Asahel here. Repent. Turn around. Go another direction.

You do not want to do this. And God screams that. God screams that from His Word. Jesus screamed it in His earthly ministry.

Mark chapter 1, Jesus said, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel. Repent ye and believe the gospel.

[17 : 45] I said the other night when I was preaching at another church, a gospel that's preached without repentance is a false gospel. And I'll go to my grave saying that. There's repentance that must take place.

If you truly believe the gospel, if you truly believe that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the crown jewel of heaven, came here and lived a sinless, perfect life, gave Himself on a hill called Calvary on an old rugged cross, was buried and placed in a borrowed tomb and resurrected the third and appointed morning and has since ascended to the right hand of majesty to make intercession for all those that have repented of their ways and trusted in Him and that He's coming back one day.

If you truly believe this Christ of the Scripture, this will drive you to repentance. Because He's coming back as judge. I've preached it many times.

People love Jesus in a manger. People love Jesus giving Himself for their sin, for their iniquity, for their transgressions. They love the thought of a substitutionary sacrifice which is exactly what Jesus Christ was.

They love the miracles. They love the blind eyes open. They love the deaf ears unstopped. They love the lame walking. They love the lepers healed. They love all these things about Christ.

[19 : 05] What they don't like though is the Christ of Revelation 19 where it says, On His thigh was a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. And He doth judge and make war.

This is the Christ that people have a hard time accepting. But folks, it's the same Christ. He is the same Christ. The same Christ that was born of a virgin in a Bethlehem manger is coming back as judge one day.

And this is the Christ that the world rejects. And if you reject that Christ, you reject all of Christ. If you reject that aspect of Christ, you reject all of Him. Every single bit. Because everything that I just described is all the same man. All the same Savior. All the same One that we read about in the Scriptures. From Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-21, it is all about Jesus Christ.

Too many people take this Scripture, they take this Bible, and they make it about themselves.

Folks, we cannot take this Scripture out of the context that it was meant to be written in.

[20 : 13] Abner said to Asahel, twice, turn thee to the side. Turn thee aside. And even invited him to, like I said earlier, pick on someone his own size.

Pick on someone of a similar stature. With less experience than what Abner had. Because Abner knew what he could do to Asahel. Folks, we all know what God is capable of.

If you've been in church any amount of time, and you have heard any amount of preaching about the God of the Bible, you know what He is capable of. If He is capable of flooding the entire world and killing everyone and everything in it, save eight people.

And He is capable of raining fire and brimstone down out of the sky to destroy four of the five cities of the plain. If He is capable of opening up the ground to swallow up Korah.

If He is capable of all of these things, He is perfectly capable of destroying me. And destroying you. And He can.

[21 : 21] And He does. And He will. In the book of Deuteronomy, He says it Himself. I kill. And I make alive. We read in the book of Exodus.

It's taken out of context so many times. Things are added to the Scripture that's not there.

Something about a death angel. When God Himself says in Exodus chapter 12, I will come through Egypt this night.

I will smite the firstborn. God said that. Not no death angel. God is perfectly capable of these things.

And this is the God that saved my soul. And if you're here born again, it's the God that saved your soul. Praise God that He uses His power on our behalf and not against us.

He has every right to do so. If I was put in hell right now, God would be completely just in doing so. But I have Scripture that says that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

[22 : 22] And I have called upon the name of the Lord. And I have been saved. I've been washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ. I've been made new. I've been made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

And that's the power of God as well. Because I couldn't do it myself. And you can't do it yourself. Asahel had every opportunity here to repent, to turn, to go another direction, to take someone else's armor as the Scripture puts it, as Abner puts it.

But he wouldn't turn. And what did it end up with? Howbeit he refused to turn aside. Wherefore, Abner with the hindered part of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him.

And he fell down there and died in the same place. Mark that well. He fell down there and died in the same place.

The path that he was on chasing glory. The path that he was on chasing fame. The path that he was on in his own pride.

[23 : 35] Be careful, Christians. Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. Be cautious in the path that he was on with the prize in sight.

It says he fell and died in the same place. On that same path. Again, Christians, we are just as susceptible to doing that.

We are just as susceptible to doing that. Lost people do it all the time. In fact, lost people are dead right now. According to Ephesians chapter 2, they're dead in their trespasses and sin.

They are spiritually without life. But there is one who can give them that life. Folks, this isn't just an account of a scene on a battlefield.

This is an account of the providence of Almighty God. Like I said, these two companies, they met around a pool for a simple contest, basically, is what it boils down to.

[24 : 42] You can read about that before verse 18 where we picked up reading tonight. But it turned into an all-out battle. What was the battle over?

It was between David's side and Saul's side which had become Ish-bosheth's side because Saul was dead at this point.

This whole battle took place not because people hated David and not because people hated Ish-bosheth. It's because man rebelled against God's plan.

What was God's plan? We covered that in the introduction to this entire sermon. Saul was never meant to be king over Israel. Saul was placed as king as Israel within the wrath of Almighty God because Israel wouldn't shut their mouth about begging for a king.

So God placed him there. But Saul was never meant to be king. Who was meant to be king? David was. And there were people that were convinced that David shouldn't be king.

[25 : 50] Ish-bosheth should be king now that Saul is dead. So it was people rebelling against the plan of God. Folks, that's all sin is. It's people rebelling against God.

But I praise God that in His mercy and in His grace and in His long-suffering and in His patience and in His love, He sent Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, to take my place knowing before the foundation of the world was ever laid that I would be a sinner, that I would rebel against Him, that I would break His commandments.

And many times do it with a smile on my face. He knew that about me. And yet He gave Jesus for me. Asahel here had opportunity to repent.

And he didn't. He refused to turn aside is what we read in verse 23. Refused! And people do that day in and day out.

I hate the thought of how many people went to hell today because they refused to turn aside. I hate the thought of how many Christians have died today.

[27 : 06] Not in a great relationship with Almighty God. Still gods. Still gods, mind you. But not in a great relationship because they had left Him to chase after something else.

But just as Asahel was chasing Abner here, think about this. Here's one man chasing whom he saw as his enemy. Chasing Abner.

And he's chasing after him with one thought in his mind to kill him and to get his armor and to take it back as a trophy to show other people.

There's one that pursues after us. Jesus Christ by way of the Holy Spirit. Almighty God by way of the Holy Spirit pursues us. He pursues the lost.

He pursues the saved. He chases after us. He keeps us once we're saved. He comforts us when we're saved. But what do we do? What do we do? We see something shiny.

[28 : 13] We see something glimmering. We see something that's going to make us a name such as Asahel here. Surely thought about killing Abner. And we chase after that instead of chasing after and grasping a hold of and clinging to the very God that saved our souls.

We chase after other things. The world. The lost. They chase after things all the time. I'm guilty of it. I've done it for 33 years of my life before I got saved.

I chased after everything. Much like Solomon. I chased after drink. I chased after women. I chased after things.

Material things. I chased after a name. I chased after fame. I chased after all of these things. But much like Solomon says in Ecclesiastes, it was all vanity.

It was all vanity. But praise God. He did not overlook that when He saved my soul. God cannot just overlook sin and sweep it under the rug.

[29 : 19] And He will not do that. Sin must be punished because He is a holy God. You think about people in Scripture that could have similar stories to Asahel here.

You think about a man named Ussah that we read about in the Old Testament when the Israelites were bringing the Ark of the Covenant back up to its rightful place and the oxen stumbled and Ussah reached out to steady the ark and he died on the spot.

Why? Because he didn't understand the holiness of God. He didn't understand the righteousness of God. That's why he died. Asahel here didn't understand what he was chasing.

He didn't understand that it would be his end. It would be his demise. And that was the furthest thing from his mind. There's many, many other examples we could give out of the Scriptures, but it says, Howbeit he refused to turn aside.

Wherefore, Abner with the hinder part and with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib that the spear came out behind him. Not even the sharp point of the spear, folks.

[30 : 26] It was the blunt end of the spear that Abner used to kill him. It didn't take an enormous amount of effort.

Abner knew what he was doing. He knew exactly where to hit him. That this man would die. And that he would live. Now, all this being said, later on in the Scripture, we read where Abner dies and he dies in the exact same manner.

He smote in the same place. But that's a whole other sermon. We won't get into that. And he fell down there and died in the same place. As I've already said, folks, mark that well.

He died in the same place. He fell and he died in the same place. Again, lost people. They're dead in pride. They're dead and they're seeking.

They're dead in a million different things. They're dead in those places. But here we read, he fell down there and died in the same place.

[31 : 31] And it came to pass that as many came to the place where Asahel fell down and died and stood still. People came to the place where this man fell and died.

It says that they stood still. Stood still for what? Because a man died there? No, because a certain man died there.

Asahel died there. I'm sure that these people thought Asahel can outrun anything. He can outrun any man. He can outrun any horse or whatever the case is because he was so quick upon his feet as we read in verse 18.

But folks, let me tell you now, you cannot outrun the hand of God. You cannot outrun judgment. You cannot outrun these things. You cannot outrun death.

I don't care what happens to me. I don't care if I've got a blue billion doctors and nurses around me. When my time comes, there's nothing they can do about it.

[32 : 36] When my number's up, it's up. But, I know, because of grace, and because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and because of the good news of the gospel, that man is a sinner, but God is a wonderful, mighty, powerful, awesome, able, and willing Savior.

I know where I'm going when I die here. And I hope that you do as well. But, these people came to the place where also hell fell and died and stood still.

They stood still out of reverence. They stood still probably out of unbelief that this man died. Again, he was chasing glory. But, it wasn't for the glory of God.

It wasn't the glory of the kingdom of God. It wasn't the glory of the promises of God. It was self-glory. And it was self-righteousness. And these are things that are preached against throughout the Bible.

There are warnings about it. I quoted Proverbs 16 earlier, Pride goes before destruction, and the Holy Spirit before a fall. Folks, we must keep in line, and we must keep our focus upon Christ and nothing else.

[33 : 49] It's just, we cannot let pride get in our way. Peter did that over in the New Testament. He told Jesus, he said, although all men be offended because of you, I shall not be offended.

And just a few hours later, he was denying his Lord. Pride said those words. And pride can lead us down the same road if we aren't real careful.

Folks, that's the message for this evening. I appreciate y'all's attention. God bless you all.