

Sermon Title: “I Am Weak”

Series: Seeking God’s Kingdom, Part 35

Scripture: 2 Samuel 3:28 - 4:12 (Psalm 34)

Main Takeaway: A surrendered heart admits, “I am weak,” lets go of control, and trusts the LORD to deliver.

I had Sonia read from 2 Samuel 3 and Psalm 34 because I wanted to show that while David experienced his fair share of hardship... He learned to trust the LORD through it all.

And so, in 2 Samuel 3 he admits his own weakness... But in Psalm 34, he says...

[SLIDE 1] Psalm 34:17 - The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.

Really? The LORD delivers them from ALL their troubles?

That might be hard to hear.

I’m sure most of us have experienced troubles that we weren’t delivered from. We know what it’s like to go through hardship that’s completely out of our control.

We’ve had moments where we’ve wept bitterly like Hannah... And grieved like David.

So how can David say that the LORD delivers the righteous from **all** their troubles?

Well, David *wasn’t* saying...
Just trust the LORD and life will be great.

This isn’t a promise that God will cure every disease...
Or pay off our car loans...
Or fix our broken relationships...

David knew better than that.
He experienced troubles that he wasn't delivered from.

So the truth that David's saying here is that
our troubles and hardships...
They never put us beyond God's reach.

Look at verse 18...

[SLIDE 2] Psalm 34:18 - The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Notice what David *doesn't* say.
He doesn't say the righteous are never brokenhearted.

He says that **when they are brokenhearted...**
The LORD is near.

So, the LORD isn't promising health and wealth...
Or a life without hardship.

David's saying that when we do go through times of trouble...
We need to remember that God doesn't abandon us in our troubles...
Instead, He walks with us through them.

But Psalm 34 says even more than that...
David's saying from experience that our troubles do not get the final word.

[SLIDE 3] Psalm 34:19 - The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all

We may experience *many* troubles...
But trouble doesn't ultimately win against those who belong to the LORD...
Because in the end, God is faithful to deliver His people.

And David would know.
He had his fair share of fear and times of trouble.
He had moments when circumstances were completely out of his control.

But it was in those hard moments that he learned where to look...
He turned to the LORD.

2 Samuel 3 shows us one of those moments.

So last week we saw Abner finally switch sides.
He used to be loyal to Saul's house and an enemy of David.
He was Saul's commander for a long time!

But now he recognizes David as God's chosen king.
So he started to help reunite Israel peacefully.

And for the first time in years...
It looked like Israel might stop fighting each other.

But then Joab came back from the battlefield.
And when he hears about Abner...
He's not happy.

So without David's knowledge...
Joab called Abner back to Hebron...
And when Abner arrived...
Joab embraced Abner with a knife to the stomach.

And what's really important is that
this crime was committed during a time and place of peace...

This wasn't on the battlefield...
It happened in Hebron where David lived.
And ever since the days of Joshua...
Hebron was an official city of refuge.¹

Refuge cities in Israel were established to protect someone who accidentally caused a death.

But Joab's actions were 100% intentional.
He went behind David's back and killed the man who could help reunite the kingdom of Israel.

¹ Joshua 20

So how will David react?
Will he punish Joab?
Because as the king...
David was responsible to uphold Israelite Law.

Deuteronomy 19:13 says...

[SLIDE 4] Deuteronomy 19:13 - Show no pity. You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood, so that it may go well with you.

But that's not what David does.

Instead, in 2 Samuel 3:39, David said to his men...

[SLIDE 5] 2 Samuel 3:39 - "Though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!"

He was talking about Joab and his brother Abishai...
They were the surviving sons of Zeruiah.

And, apparently, even though David was the king...
These guys had so much power and influence that David felt like he couldn't bring them to justice in a "Deuteronomy 19" kind of way.

So David simply left it to the LORD to repay their evil.

But look at the next chapter.
Chapter 4 is just 12 verses...
But it shows us a very similar crime.

The scene shifts up north on the outskirts of Israel where king Ish-Bosheth lived.

In this chapter, we see two men sneak into the king's house...
They make their way to his bedroom...
And while Ish-Bosheth was taking a nap...
They stabbed him in the stomach.

Then they brought his head to David and explained what they did.

Let's see how David reacted to their crime...

[SLIDE 6] 2 Samuel 4:9-10 - ...“As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, when someone told me, ‘Saul is dead,’ and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news!”

[SLIDE 7] 2 Samuel 4:11 - How much more—when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed—should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!”

Then David gave the order to execute these guys for their crime.

Now...

What's the difference between what these guys did...

And what Joab and his brother did?

Because both situations are incredibly similar...

[SLIDE 8] Comparison Chart

Both Abner and Ish-Bosheth were declared innocent by David...

Both of them were killed during a time of peace...

Both crimes involved deception...

Both were stabbed in the stomach..

Both crimes involved two brothers...

And both crimes could potentially benefit David politically.

So what's the difference between these crimes?

Morally? Not much.

Politically? Almost everything.

David knew what justice looked like.

He was willing to carry it out against Recab and Baanah.
But he wasn't willing to carry it out against Joab and Abishai.

Because as he said...

[SLIDE 9] 2 Samuel 3:39 - ...though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me.

Recab and Baanah were expendable.
Executing them according to the Law cost David almost nothing.

But Joab and Abashai?
That's a different story.

They were David's nephews.
And Joab was his military commander and political ally.
He was pretty much indispensable.

So punishing Joab could have proved costly...
People might not have been happy about that...

That's the tension that the writer of 2 Samuel wants us to notice.
On one hand, David trusts the LORD...
But on the other hand...
He feels too weak to do what the Law required of him as the king.

Look at what David says in...

[SLIDE 10] 2 Samuel 4:9 - "...the LORD... who has delivered me out of every trouble..."

And yet in chapter 3...
When faced with Joab and Abishai...
David says: *"I'm too weak to deal with these men."*

David knows the LORD is his deliverer.

But when obedience becomes costly...

**It seems like David's fear of what might happen
got in the way of fully trusting the LORD.**

And that decision had its own consequences.

Because Joab will continue to cause David trouble for the rest of his life.

Now to be fair...

Admitting his own weakness isn't a sin...

David's just *recognizing his reality*.

He doesn't feel powerful enough to bring Joab and Abishai to justice.

I think that's important to notice.

Because being weak isn't always the same thing as being unfaithful.

David wasn't just making excuses...

He *really* was weak...

He *couldn't* control Joab...

In fact...

Did you notice how Joab talked to David?

After Abner left in peace...

Joab went to David and gave him a piece of his mind!

He said...

[SLIDE 11] 2 Samuel 3:24-25 - "What have you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why did you let him go? Now he is gone! You know Abner son of Ner; he came to deceive you and observe your movements and find out everything you are doing."

Now, I have to ask...

Is that how a military commander should address his king?

I don't think so!

So, clearly David couldn't control Joab.
He also couldn't predict how the army would respond if he executed Joab.

Politically speaking, convicting Joab was risky...
And David felt too weak to take that risk.

So instead, David publicly condemned Joab's actions...
Actually his words are pretty harsh!
David said...

[SLIDE 12] 2 Samuel 3:28-29 - "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. May his blood fall on the head of Joab and on his whole family! May Joab's family never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food."

He says this in front of everyone... including Joab!

Then he ordered everyone to tear their clothes and put on sackcloth so they could walk in front of Abner while they mourned his death.

Then comes an important moment...
Chapter 3, verse 31, is the first time in Samuel when David is actually called:
King David.

[SLIDE 13] 2 Samuel 3:31b - King David himself walked behind the bier [coffin].

I think this says something about David's character...
Because the first time he's called *King David*...
Is when he's seen mourning someone who used to be an enemy.

Usually when a leader like this falls, and a transition in power follows...
There would be a celebration in the streets...

But instead...
King David sings a lament...

[SLIDE 14] 2 Samuel 3:33b-34 - “Should Abner have died as the lawless die? Your hands were not bound, your feet were not fettered. You fell as one falls before the wicked.”

David was declaring Abner's innocence.

Abner was not among the “**lawless**”...
 — or the “foolish” [*Hebrew = nabal*]
 Not foolish as in a lack of intelligence...
 But foolish as in living wickedly before God.

And remember who's listening to David's lament?
 Joab.

David's standing over Abner's body saying...
 Abner wasn't the foolish or wicked one...
 The one who killed him was.

I mean...
David may have felt Joab was too strong for him...
But David's lament is a flex if I've ever seen one!

David not only made Joab attend the funeral of the man he murdered...
 But he also made him listen while publicly calling his actions wicked...
AND he even made Joab participate by mourning in a sackcloth!

That's quite the scene!
 I imagine it was pretty humiliating for Joab.

But you know...
 I don't think this was all just political theater.
 I think David was genuinely upset about Abner's death.

In fact, we've seen David do this before.

When Saul and Jonathan died...
 David mourned.

He wept and fasted and even wrote a lament...
And now he's doing the same thing for Abner.

So I believe David's tears were real.

But there's also the reality that **David needed everyone to know that he had nothing to do with Abner's death.**

And it worked.

Verse 37 says that on that day...
Everyone knew that David had no part in the murder of Abner.

That's important...

Because when David finally becomes king over all Israel in chapter 5...
Nobody can say David murdered his way onto the throne.
His actions proved it.

He refused to kill Saul...
He had nothing to do with Abner's death...
And he brought justice to those who killed Ish-Bosheth.

The road to the throne was clear for David...
But he's not the one responsible for making it happen.

Because ultimately...

[SLIDE 15] David isn't in control of how this kingdom comes together. The LORD is.

Even though he couldn't control Joab...
Or the politics...
Or how Israel would respond if he brought justice to Joab...

And yet despite his lack of strength and control...
The LORD's will kept moving forward anyway.

This tells me something...

**We are not *ultimately* in control.
Jesus is.**

And just because we follow Him...
That doesn't mean we're promised a trouble-free life.

Again, we'll see that Joab will be a thorn in David's side for the rest of his life.
But in the end...
Joab doesn't get the final word...
David's troubles don't get the final word.

The LORD does.

That's why David could cry out to the LORD in Psalm 34.

David was saying...
We *will* have troubles in this world...
But the LORD is close to the brokenhearted...
And He ultimately delivers us...

**Even when things seem like they're spiraling out of control...
We can trust that nothing can stop the LORD's purposes.**

But how does that truth speak into our lives today?
What if things spin out of control?

Today's passages invite us to examine ourselves and ask the question...

[SLIDE 16] Is my trust in the LORD based on what I can control?

I can tell you from personal experience...
When we're faced with the unimaginable...
There are moments when the control we thought we had...
Is gone.

In those moments...
We're simply left with a choice...
Will I trust the LORD in this, or not?

I don't know if you've ever felt like that...
Like when circumstances were completely beyond your control...
And the only thing you could do was cry out to Jesus...

But as incredibly hard as those moments are...
They teach us something...

[SLIDE 17] Trusting the LORD in everything involves a daily choice to live in the reality that Jesus is King... not me.

This is just as true in the ordinary moments of life
As it is in the hardest moments of our lives.

The LORD is King over everything.

He's King over our calendar...
Our family...
Our finances...
Our plans...
Our ministries...
Our health...
Our future...

Jesus is King over all of it.
He's the One who's ultimately in control.

Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus sustains “**all things** by his powerful word.”

Colossians 1:16-17 says that “**all things** have been created through Him and for Him.” Jesus is the One who holds all things together.

And Jesus is the One who has the final say...

Revelation 19:16 says that Jesus is “**King of kings and Lord of lords.**”

So...

Am I actually living like Jesus is King?
Am I willing to surrender it all to Jesus?

Because as we've seen with David...

[SLIDE 18] A surrendered heart admits, “I am weak,” lets go of control, and trusts the LORD to deliver.

So... all of us came here this morning from different circumstances...

Maybe you're feeling pretty good about life?
Maybe everything feels under control?

Or maybe you resonate with David when he admits his own weakness?
Maybe life feels like it's falling apart?

Or maybe you're in a place where life did fall apart...
And now you're living in the aftermath of the storm.

So may this truth comfort all of us this morning:

As the people of God...
For those who trust in Jesus...
Our confidence is not in our own ability to hold everything together.

Our confidence is in Jesus.
He's the One who holds all things together.

And so we can say with David...
When I am weak...
The LORD is near...
He alone is my deliverer.

Let's Pray**We pray as Jesus taught us to pray:**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into testing, but deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.