

## 2 Samuel 2:12-3:39

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[ 0 : 00 ]     2 Samuel chapter 2 verse 12. So that place in Gibeon was called Hekath Hazarim.

The battle that day was very fierce and Abner and the Israelites were defeated by David's men. The three sons of Zariah were there, Joab, Abishai and Ashael. Now Ashael was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle.

He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him. Abner looked behind him and asked, Is that you, Ashael? It is, he answered. Then Abner said to him, Turn aside to the right or to the left.

Take one of the young men and strip him of his weapons. But Ashael would not stop chasing him. Again, Abner warned Ashael, Stop chasing me. Why should I strike you down?

How could I look your brother Joab in the face? Ashael refused to give up the pursuit. So Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Ashael's stomach and the spear came out through his back.

[ 1 : 35 ]     He fell there and died on the spot. And every man stopped when he came to the place where Ashael had fallen and died. But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. And as the sun was setting, they came near the hill of Amner, near Geir, on the way to the wasteland of Gibeon.

And the men of Benjamin rallied behind Abner and they formed themselves into a group and took their stand on top of a hill. Abner called out to Joab, Must the sword devour forever? Don't you realise that this will end in bitterness?

How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their fellow Israelites? Joab answered, As surely as God lives, if you had not spoken, the men would have continued pursuing them until morning. So Joab blew the trumpet and all the troops came to a halt.

They no longer pursued Israel, nor did they fight any more. All that night, Abner and his men marched through the Araba. They crossed the Jordan, continued in the morning hours and came to Mahanahim.

Then Joab stopped pursuing Abner and assembled the whole army. Besides Ashael, 19 of David's men were found missing. But David's men had killed 360 Benjamites who were with Abner.

[ 2 : 39 ]     They took Ashael and buried him in his father's tomb at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched all night and arrived at Hebron by daybreak. The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time.

David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. Sons were born to David in Hebron. His first son was Amnon, the son of Hanum of Jezreel.

His second, Kiliab, the son of Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. The third, Absalom, the son of Macha, the daughter of Tamal, the king of Geshur. The fourth, Adonijah, the son of Haggith.

The fifth, Shephthi, the son of Abital. The sixth, Ithraim, the son of David's wife, Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron. During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of Saul.

Now Saul had a concubine named Rizpah, the daughter of Ai. And Ish-bosheth said to Abner, why did you sleep with my father's concubine? Abner was very angry because of what Ish-bosheth said.

[ 3 : 43 ] So he answered, am I a dog's head on Judah's side? This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and his family and friends. I haven't handed you over to David, yet now you accuse me of an offense involving this woman.

May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely. If I do not do for David what the Lord has promised him on oath and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba.

Ish-bosheth did not dare to say another word to Abner because he was afraid of him. Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David. Whose land is it? Make an agreement with me and I will help bring all Israel over to you.

Good, said David. I will make an agreement with you, but I demand one thing of you. Do not come into my presence unless you bring Michael, daughter of Saul, when you come to see me. Then David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, son of Saul, demanding, give me my wife Michael, who I betrothed to myself for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins.

So Ish-bosheth gave orders and had her taken away from her husband, Paltiel, son of Laish. Her husband, however, went with her, weeping behind her all the way to Baram. Then Abner said to him, go back home. So he went back.

[ 4 : 58 ] Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, for some time you have wanted to make David your king. Now do it, for the Lord promised David by my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.

Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person and then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole tribe of Benjamin wanted to do. When Abner, who had twenty men with him, came to David at Hebron, David prepared a feast for him and his men.

Then Abner said to David, let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make a covenant with you and that you may rule over all that your heart desires. So David sent Abner away and he went in peace.

Just then David's men and Joab returned from a raid and brought with them a great deal of plunder. But Abner was no longer with David in Hebron because David had sent him away and he'd gone in peace.

When Joab and all the soldiers with him arrived, he was told that Abner, son of Ner, had come to the king and that the king had sent him away and that he'd gone in peace. So Joab went to the king and said, what have you done?

[ 6 : 06 ] 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 to observe your movements and find out everything you are doing.

Joab then left David and sent messengers after Abner and they brought him back from the cistern at Sisera. But David did not know it. And when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into an inner chamber as if to speak with him privately.

And there to avenge the blood of his brother Ashael, Joab stabbed him in the stomach and he died. Later, when David heard about this, he said, 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 sword or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food.

Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asael in the battle of Gibeon. Then David said to Joab and all the people with him, tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner.

[ 7 : 13 ] King David himself walked behind the bear. They buried Abner in Hebron and the king wept aloud at Abner's tomb and the people wept also. The king sang this lament for Abner.

Should Abner have died as the lawless die? Your hands were not bound, your feet were not fettered, you fell as one who falls before the wicked. The people wept over him again.

Then they came and urged David to eat something while it was still day. But David took an oath saying, may God deal with me, be it ever so severely if I taste bread or anything else before the sun sets.

All the people took note and were pleased. Indeed, everything the king did pleased them. So on that day, all the people there and all Israel knew that the king had no part in the murder of Abner, son of Nair.

Then the king said to his men, do you not realize that a commander and a great man has fallen in Israel today? And today, though I am anointed king, I am weak.

[ 8 : 11 ] And these sons of Zariah are too strong for me. May the Lord repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds. Well, that's the Lord's word. Let me pray and ask for the Lord's help as we come to look at it together.

Heavenly Father, we recognize this is a really, really long passage and a long story. So we ask for your help. We pray that you might give us the attention that we need. But even more than just attention, we pray that you give us tender hearts that love to listen to you.

Thank you for this confidence that we have that when your word is preached, your spirit is at work in our hearts and our lives, bringing us to repentance and faith and renewed confidence in Jesus.

Do that work in our hearts. Even this morning, we pray in Jesus name. Amen. Well, try and hold that passage open and follow along with me if you can.

Like I said, on the inside of your notice sheet is an outline of the sermon in very brief terms. And you might want to scribble things in there if that helps you. Now, like I said, it's a mammoth story. It covers about two years during which Abner and Saul's son Ish-bosheth fight a civil war with David and his commander Joab.

[ 9 : 20 ] Most of the action happens between the two sides in Gibeon, which is a short distance from Hebron where David is. And a longer trip for Abner and his men, who you might remember from last week, are up north in a place called Mahanaheim.

Now, my intention this morning, you will be pleased to know, is not to walk through these verses verse by verse. That would mean that we would all miss lunch. Instead, what I want us to do is just to take a closer look at the three main characters, Abner, Joab and David, and see what they have to say to us today.

So let's start with Abner. Now, I don't know how you might imagine Abner. This is what Wikipedia thinks he looks like. The guy in green, shown in a medieval Bible. I'm not guessing he probably didn't look anything like that.

He has an impossibly thin waist for a soldier. And he's wearing armor over his mouth while speaking to the king. So I'm sure that's not the case. But whatever he might have looked like, we know that he was a stubborn and proud man.

We found that last week, didn't we? For some reason, he wouldn't give up the fight with David, even though he knew he had clearly lost. And this week, we find out that as well as being stubborn, he is also quite shrewd and wise.

[ 10 : 34 ] In fact, the verb most commonly used of Abner in the passage this morning is the verb to say or set. Now, that might sound a bit boring. But the point is that every time you meet Abner in the story, he is negotiating.

He is saying something to someone to try and get a certain end. Particularly trying to talk his way out of trouble or negotiate terms of peace. Gives us a window, I think, into Abner's cunning.

In the story, Abner is the man with a plan. He's the guy who knows what he wants and he's going out to get it. Let me show you a few of those things. So just walk through it with me. And in the first scene is this, the pool of Gibeon, down at chapter 2, verse 14.

Abner's plan here is that instead of a full-blown war, that he would find people who would have a duel in front of them and try and settle it that way. Verse 14 of chapter 2.

Then Abner said to Jab, let's have some of the young men get up and fight hand-to-hand in front of us. All right, says Jab, let them do it. Anyway, it doesn't really work. It was a clever idea, but in the 12 fights, there's no winner because they both die at exactly the same time.

[ 11 : 43 ] Each of them killing the other. It then ensues that a big battle follows. In verse 17, it's a battle that Abner and his men lose. And in the next scene, you find Abner on the run at the end of that battle from a guy called Ashael, who is trying to kill him.

Now Ashael, you might remember from the reading, is Joab's brother, and he is a fast runner. Thinking, I guess, that if he kills Abner, then the whole thing will be over.

So Ashael is chasing him down and is not giving up. Now Abner knows he's in trouble. Ashael is a famous runner of the time. And he doesn't appear to be carrying any weapons either, while Abner, it seems, is loaded down with them.

So imagine that this is Usain Bolt chasing you down, and you've got your school bag on and your school shoes on, and he's in his running gear. You are stuffed. He is going to catch up with you.

So Abner knows that, and he's trying to wheedle his way out of it with words, calling out in verse 21, saying, Turn aside! You know, stop chasing me, he says.

[ 12 : 47 ] Now of course, Abner knows that killing Ashael would be a bad move, because it would make Joab hate him even more. But Ashael won't give up the chase, and so he gets killed by Abner, who seems to just stop him with the butt end of his spear.

And Ashael runs through it. Kind of gross story. Moving on, in the story, Abner is speaking again, negotiating in verse 26 to persuade Joab and his army to stop pursuing the Israelites who they're beaten.

He says, you know, if you don't do it, this will end in bitterness, he says. The final words to notice are with King Ish-bosheth. Ish-bosheth, if you remember, is Saul's son, who's been installed as king over the northern tribes, while David is just ruling over Judah.

Importantly, if you look down at chapter 3, verse 6, you'll tell us that Abner is getting stronger and stronger in the northern kingdom. He's not the king, but he is in charge of the army, and he is growing in strength.

This is surprising to King Ish-bosheth, and he doesn't like it. He feels threatened by Abner, so he accuses Abner of taking one of Saul's concubines as his own.

[ 13 : 56 ] Presumably, I guess, in order to try and take over some legitimate claim to the throne. That's what Ish-bosheth thinks. Anyway, Abner goes mad at the accusation.

He says, you know, am I a dog's head, he asks. As in, am I really a dirty dog betrayer? Is that what you think of me, he says. And then he says, I've changed my mind.

I will make David king, he says, in effect, in verse 9. Now, we could say more about Abner, but the point to notice is that Abner is always speaking, always negotiating, the man with a plan, trying to negotiate terms.

He even thinks it's within his power to make David king over the whole of Israel. But in the end of the story, Abner is dead.

He's murdered by Joab and Abishai as revenge for Ashel's life. Now, in this song that David sings about Abner, he calls him a great man in chapter 3, verse 38.

[ 14 : 53 ] The king said to his men, don't you realize that a commander and a great man has fallen in Israel this day? But still, we're told, he dies what is as the lawless die, he says in verse 33, which really is the word for fool.

He dies a fool's death in the end. The end is bitter for him. Now, the chapter here, if you like, is full of chaos, right? There are battles, there are jewels, there's wars, there's murder, there's chases.

It's a mess. It's a total mess. And in the midst of the chaos and the mess, Abner stands out, doesn't he? As the man of reason. The man who uses self-confidence.

You know, with everything that's going on around him, this is the man who thinks that it's within his power to make David king just by his negotiating skill. But in the end, he dies a fool's death.

He's wrong. Now, I think there is not a person in this room who wouldn't in their heart of hearts like to be a little bit more like Abner. Don't you think that?

[ 15 : 59 ] Don't you want to be that guy? Don't you want to be full of self-confidence? Full of brilliant ideas. Skilled at negotiating. You know, Abner, if he was at school with you, he would be that kid at school who never does his homework but always gets away with it.

You know the person just able to negotiate their way out of anything. Who doesn't want to be that person? He'd be the guy who's running the business, making lots of money, but you never see him do any hard work.

Just seems to negotiate his way out of it. He'd be the voice of reason in the family argument who always gets his own way, be the guy who always seems to land on his feet. Now, there's nothing in a sense wrong with that, particularly.

Almost all of Abner's ideas are good ones in the passage. Ashel, I think, would have been better off listening to Abner, probably. But the point of the story is not that Abner's ideas are rubbish, but that for all his brilliance, he died a fool's death.

He died a fool's death. Why? Well, because I think the point is it doesn't matter how much self-confidence you have or would like to have. This world is cruel and chaotic, and even the greatest wisdom, even the greatest self-confidence leads to a fool's death.

[ 17 : 12 ] Abner had it all going for him, and it wasn't enough. He had everything, and he lost it all. What you need to know from the story is that human words, human skill, human negotiations come to an end.

They are bitter in the end. If I put it really bluntly, you can say, can't you, from the story, If all you've got in life are your own good ideas and your own plans, then you know you will die a fool's death.

That's the story. Next and more quickly, let's look at Joab. Here's Joab in his Lego character. And in contrast to Abner, every time we meet Joab in the civil war, he is being a thug or a strong man.

The passage variously describes him as pursuing the enemy, blowing the battle trumpet, bringing back the spoils of war, striking people, and killing people.

If you look down at chapter 3, verse 22, you get an idea of how Joab works. Here, Joab has just returned from a raid on enemy territory. I love verse 22. It's one of those great verses in the story because there's no real explanation.

[ 18 : 24 ] It's so ordinary for Joab and his men to be on the raid of somewhere else. They don't even tell you where he's gone or why he went. They just tell you that he won. That's what you need to know about Joab.

He is a strong man. A strong man. And he comes back with a spoil of war. Now, Joab arrives back in Hebron. He's told about David's meeting with Abner and about David sending him away in peace.

And he is not impressed. Look at what he says in verse 24 of chapter 3. So Joab went to the king and said, what have you done? Look, Abner came to you.

Why did you let him go? Now he's gone. You know Abner, son of Nair. He came to deceive you and observe your movements and find out everything you are doing. Joab clearly thinks that David has lost the plot.

You know, you don't win at life, David, by letting your enemies play tricks on you. You don't win at life by sending away your enemies in peace. You should have killed him while you had the chance, he says.

[ 19 : 19 ] It's an interesting twist in the story that Hebron itself is one of the so-called cities of refuge that Joshua set up when he conquered the land. The cities of refuge were distributed across the land of Israel as places where you could run to for refuge, for peace and security.

If you had accidentally killed someone, you could run to those places and live in peace. And the twist in the story is that Joab is calling Abner back to the city of refuge and he kills him in the city of refuge in revenge for killing Ashel, seemingly in accident in self-defense with the butt of his spear.

It explains, I think, why David is so mad with Joab in verse 29 and curses his whole family, a curse which does eventually get carried out by David's son Solomon, who puts Joab to death for the murder of Abner and another murder, which we'll come across in a few weeks time.

Now, the point of all this is in the contrast between Abner and Joab. You know, Abner is the man with a plan, the smooth negotiator, and Joab is the thug, right?

The strong man. But in the end of the story, neither of them achieve their ends. Abner dies the fool's death and Joab is cursed.

[ 20 : 38 ] Now, our world is still full of thugs, isn't it? I don't know, maybe you're one. You probably don't slip a dagger into unsuspecting enemies when you call them into an inner room. But perhaps you just shout and yell to get your own way.

Perhaps you lie and cheat at work. Maybe you put a verbal knife in behind people's backs. Maybe you stir things up to get your own way and put everyone else on edge, using whatever necessary means to push yourself forward and push others out of the way.

Or maybe that all just sounds a bit too brutal and a bit too nasty, doesn't it? Maybe you're not like that. Maybe instead, like Joab, you cling on to bitterness and revenge, harboring ideas of paying people back for past wrongs, but you never follow through.

But you'd love to. You look at someone like Joab and go, I wish I was a bit more like him. I wish I had to follow through. Now, Joab is here to tell you, listen, that doesn't work.

It doesn't work. Abner's cunning wisdom dies a fool's death. Joab's strength is cursed in the end. If all your confidence for the future is in your own plans, you will die a fool's death.

[ 21 : 46 ] If all your plans are in your own strength, you're cursed. That's the story. You can't bully your way through life. The force of your personality or your family or the size even of your biceps will not be enough.

The final character to consider this morning, though, is King David. This is what a 15th century painter thought David looked like. He's wearing a bucket hat. So he's clearly a man ahead of the fashion curve.

But fashionable or not, what the writer wants you to notice about David is something rather extraordinary. David here is the success story. David succeeds in the passage where Abner and Joab fail.

David succeeds in bringing the kingdom out of the chaos and under his rule. David manages to get all Israel to unite in peace and harmony.

Yet, when you look at the passage, the verbs used of David are verbs like this. Wept. Wept aloud. Or lifted up his voice.

[ 22 : 48 ] Or lamented. In verse 39 of chapter 3, David summarizes his actions like this. And today, though I am the anointed king, I am weak.

Literally, the word there is tender or gentle. And these sons of Zerah are too strong for me. May the Lord repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds. Now, come back to me if you've wandered away in your thoughts.

Because this is the whole point of the story, right? It's meant to be a surprise to you. Think about this carefully. Here it is in a sentence. It is David's tears and his gentleness that conquer Israel.

Not Abner's wisdom and not Joab's muscles. So despite the fact that you'd be hard-pressed, I think, to find a tougher man in all of history than Joab, there's probably very few men in all of history who have killed as many people with their bare hands as Joab.

He was muscles, right? And yet he failed. Abner, the shrewd negotiator, the politician, both come to nothing.

[ 23 : 58 ] Yet at the end of the story, Israel, the part belonging to Ish-bosheth, are pleased with King David. Verse 36 says it twice in quick succession, just to make sure you don't miss it. The tear-filled David does what a brute strongman and a political negotiator could not do.

Now, why is that the story? Now, let me tell you that the point of the story is not, so therefore be gentle like David. I mean, that is not a bad idea, right?

Gentleness has a lot to commend it. We could all do with being more gentle, and I'm sure of that. But the point of the story is not so much try hard to be a little bit more like David. Rather, the story is about this extraordinary power given to a gentle king.

God's people will not be united by human force or skill, but by the gentleness of God's king. Here, you get in 2 Samuel chapter 3, you get a glimpse of what God can do through the tears of his king.

I think one of the struggles that we have with these stories in the Bible is that they feel so different, don't they, to anything we experience. I mean, this is like a totally different world, isn't it? And it is, and you read that.

[ 25 : 14 ] But these ancient Bible stories have a greater purpose, don't they? They are pointing us to the bigger story of the Bible. The bigger story of what God is doing in history.

The Apostle Paul tells us that they were written for our warning and our encouragement, because although we are different to them, we are in the same big story of what God is doing. So we, like them, find that actually our main battle is not with the other half of Israel or Judah.

Our main battle is with sin. The big civil war in the Bible is not the civil war between the northern tribes and the southern tribes of Israel. Not at all.

The big civil war in the Bible is between humanity and the God who made them. That's the civil war in the Bible. We fight God for control of our lives.

We long to live our own way, to be our own gods, to rule our own lives. We long to ignore the one who made us, to the one to whom we belong. And the Bible's big question is, what will end this war?

[ 26 : 18 ] What will end the war between humanity and the God who made them? What possibly can end that war? Where will the decisive battle be? Where will the hostilities between us and God end?

How can we be melted from our stubborn, proud hearts to joyfully follow God as king? Well, 2 Samuel chapter 3 says, no, it's not wheedling words that will do it.

No, you can't end this conflict by saying stuff. You can't pray enough prayers or say enough creeds. You can't end this conflict with human strength either.

You can't fight your way to peace with God. Instead, the decisive victory in this great war of history will be in the gentle weakness and tears of God's anointed king, Jesus.

Not as he weeps over the death of his enemy, but as he dies in our place on the cross. In Matthew 11 verse 29, Jesus says this of himself.

[ 27 : 24 ] He says, I am gentle and humble in heart, and in me you will find rest for your souls. Jesus there effectively says to you, listen, I'm David.

In this story, I'm David, says Jesus. I'm like David. I'm not here with a stick to beat you. I'm not here with a list of demands for you to keep.

I'm here with tears in my eyes, with nails in my hands and my feet, in brokenness for your sin. I will conquer your heart with love and gentleness, forgiveness and grace.

Now, there's so much you could say about that, isn't there? But I think the big point for us to see from chapter 3 is how this gentleness of David sort of lures in and draws in the people of Israel.

You notice that? You know, it's in 2 Samuel 3 as the people see the tears of the king. They listen to his lament that they are sort of pulled towards him, drawn towards him, dropping their swords and their hostility, seeing in him someone they can trust and follow.

[ 28 : 30 ] And so with the Lord Jesus, I don't know what you imagine him to be like, but he's not yelling and cursing at you. He's not battering you for your rebellion against him.

Instead, you find Jesus in the Gospels as a gentle saviour who dies for your sin. Jesus is not strong and impressive in any conventional way, but not because he's soft, but because he's drawing us to himself with gentle power.

Dying for the bruised reed and the faintly burning wick. Sweating blood for our sin. Dying in our place and rising to victory. Drawing us in with his beauty.

See, think about it like this. Imagine for a moment, you're not Abner, you're not Joab, you're not David. Imagine yourself to be one of the Israelites, yeah? Just think about it like that. You're one of the Israelites. You're trying to choose who to follow.

And you see these three great characters, yeah, that you could follow. You know, here is Abner, Joab and David. You know, Abner's always got the right thing to say.

[ 29 : 32 ] He's this man of wheedling power. He seems to always negotiate his way to success. Then there's the brute strength of Joab. Maybe I'm going to follow the brute strength of Joab. That guy is Mr. Muscle, isn't he?



He's amazing. But then there's the gentle King David who is weeping over the brokenness and offers you peace and kindness. Who are you going to follow? Who are you going to follow?

Well, it's obvious, isn't it? You've got to follow David. And so for us this morning, the question for all of us this morning from these verses is this. Who are you going to follow in life?

Who are you going to follow? Which way are you going to go? What's going to be your hope? Where are you going to put your trust? Is it going to be in your muscles? Your strength? Is it going to be in your words or the words of others? Is it going to be in politicians?

Is it going to be in the YouTube profit? Or is it going to be in the strength of a robust temper or a big bank balance? What is it? Or will it be in the outstretched arms and flowing blood of a gentle Savior Jesus?

[ 30 : 34 ] Who offers you forgiveness and life eternal. Now maybe this morning you're not a Christian and you're here to see this for the very first time. Or maybe this morning you've been a Christian and you've lost your way a little bit.

You'd perhaps call yourself a Christian but it's been a long time since really you were in church or even thought about the Lord Jesus. Or maybe you've been a Christian. You've been here for years and years and years.

Let me invite all of us to come back to the gentle King Jesus. Let me remind you that the wisdom of the world dies a fool's death.

Let me remind us that strength comes to nothing. I think this week this is particularly important for us to remember as a church, isn't it? It is not our words or even our bank balance that will win the day.

It's the gentle Savior Jesus. He is all that we need. He is enough for us. The Apostle Paul puts it like this in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 25. The foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

[ 31 : 42 ] So we go in his name and we trust in him. Let me pray. Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, how we thank you for this brilliant portrait of the Lord Jesus.

Our gentle Savior. Who with pierced hands and feet, blood flowing from his side, dies to save us from our sin before rising victoriously and ascending into heaven.

Oh Lord, how we love him. How we trust him. How we turn from any confidence in our own strength or our own words, our own money, our own wisdom, our own position.

And we trust in Christ. Please, Lord, we pray. Would you provide us with all that we need as we come to King Jesus, our gentle Savior.

Pray especially this morning for anyone who does not yet know Christ. Please, please show them now the gentleness of your King Jesus. That they may be drawn to him.

[ 32 : 46 ] To find in him what they cannot find anywhere else. Hope and life and forgiveness. So we thank you for Jesus and we pray in his name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.