

**Recap of 11/16/25 message by Pastor Steve Plank
("Keeping Biblical Standards") 2 Samuel 3:22-39:**

After David and Abner make peace following a long war, Joab risks that peace by deceiving and killing Abner. He claims the right of a blood avenger (Nu 35:16-21), but he is actually a murderer. David's and the peoples' response make it clear that nobody believes Joab was justified in killing Abner. As king, David is ultimately responsible for ensuring Abner's murderer is punished. According to the Mosaic law, failure to punish the murderer defiles the land (Nu 35:30-34) Though David makes it clear that he had nothing to do with the murder, he does not keep God's standard given in the law. Instead, he makes an excuse as to why he is unable to do as the LORD commands.

We often choose the same path. We tend to follow God well when it's obvious to us how doing so will lead to good outcomes. When we just can't see how following God's commands will work out for our good, we tend to come up with very rational sounding excuses to follow our own way. Brothers and sisters, this ought not be. The life of faith involves following God's commands regardless of what we perceive the outcome will be, believing that whatever the outcome, it is the best of all possible outcomes. We are to trust in God, not in ourselves.

The modern notion of Jesus as the ultimate "nice guy" is not Biblical. Jesus was certainly a friend of sinners because He came to satisfy God's justice by dying in our place, taking our punishment. But Jesus was never soft on sin. He consistently called his followers to Godly standards and railed against those who did not accept His message.

As the Church, the body of Christ, we too are commanded to keep God's standards (Mt 18:15-17, 1 Co 5:9-13). We are never called to accept unrepentant sin in our midst. We are called to love and preach the Gospel to unbelievers in the hope that they will be saved. But we do not expect they will act like Chris before becoming Christians. However, we are to expect believers to be Christlike. We are called to love and admonish believers who sin in the hopes that they confess their sin. If they do not confess their sin, we are commanded to have nothing to do with them, in the hope that they will realize their error, repent, and are restored to fellowship. All of this must be done with humility and grace, lest we become legalistic.