

David, Part 12 2-13-22

Lust & Death, Part 2

First a quick review, since this is part two of our look at the great sin of King David. Last week we read II Samuel 11 which tells us about David's adultery with Bathsheba and the indirect murder of Uriah. We looked at the circumstances of David's sin, his prosperity and power, as well as his sloth and pride. We looked then at the commission of the sin, how lust and opportunity brought forth sin. And then we considered how that sin led to more sin as David was motivated to great evil in order to appear righteous. His initial trespass was not properly dealt with so it led to more and greater sin. And that is where we left David last week - in this hard-hearted condition. He was on a downward spiral, sinking down and away from the God who loved him. 12:1 says *Then the Lord*. When everything seems darkest and you wonder if there is any hope these are the words that pop up over and over again, "Then the Lord." 12:1a *Then the Lord sent Nathan to David*. This is a simple but a beautiful word. Think of what is happening here. Here is a man whom God has made and whom God has redeemed and whom God has appointed as ruler over Israel. He, this one, this God-blessed man, turns his back on the Lord, sins grievously against his God and David does not immediately repent. He is not broken at this point. He is hardened against God. The sweet communion of man and maker which we read of so often in the Psalms has been severed by David's sin. Now understand, God does not need David. David needs God. God has not wronged David; David has wronged God. But who is it who takes the first step toward reconciliation? Maybe some of you involved in interpersonal conflicts can apply this for yourselves right now. Who begins the restoration of the relationship?

It is the offended God, the insulted Sovereign, the forsaken Lord who is still the forgiving Redeemer. Not only is He willing to receive us when we come to Him - as the Father received back his prodigal. That is grace enough, but what is even more amazing is that God comes to and seeks out his rebel children, even as the shepherd goes after the lost sheep. 12:1a *Then the Lord sent Nathan to David*. Do you see what a gracious act of God this is? The Lord could have just let David go and sink into the pit of his own sin. That's exactly what David deserved, really better than he deserved. But God, being rich in mercy and patient with his children came to him. David's conscience and the word of God should have been sufficient to convict David. God could easily have said, "He doesn't need Nathan he has Moses," but He didn't. He sent the faithful prophet with a rebuke from God. This is

God's grace. When you are in sin it is not grace that leaves you to squirm in it. That confronting brother or sister, or wife or neighbor is a gift of God to pull you up and give fresh air to your soul. By His grace 12:1ab *Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said.* Now, the drama of what we are about to read is just incredible. I wish I could make us appreciate it fully. What a story Nathan tells. We have seen the circumstances, the commission and the continuation of David's sin. Now we come to the confrontation over David's sin. 1c-3 *There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. ³But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb which he bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, and was like a daughter to him.* Can't you just picture this humble peasant with this precious little family pet. This man couldn't give nice things to his children. All they had was their special pet lamb. 4-5a *Now a traveler came to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. ⁵Then David's anger burned greatly against the man.* Doesn't yours? Don't you find yourself getting steamed over this kind of thoughtless cruelty. We rise up in righteous indignation. We want to see this rich man get punished. So did David. 5 *Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die."* David was right. This man did deserve to die -but he didn't say the man would die. Instead 6 *He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.* This you see, is what Biblical law called for on such occasions. Then, in verse 7, we come to what may be the greatest line in the history of sermons. In the midst of David's righteous anger 7ab *Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! 7c-9 Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! ⁹Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.*

Ahh! Like a flaming arrow this word went straight to the heart of King David. When Nathan said "You are the man" the sting of conviction must have been

overwhelming. The point of Nathan's parable was not lost on David. He could see the parallels and suddenly the full weight of his guilt crashed upon him. Nathan displayed before David the horror of his sin, the vileness of what he had done and redirected David's moral outrage toward himself. Conviction of sin you see means that your moral outrage, which we typically direct toward all those rotten sinners out there, gets rechanneled toward your own moral failure. You learn as David did that "you are the man." And then Nathan just pours it on. *7cd Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul.'* And he goes on to show off just how ugly is the sin of David because not only did he violate the life and dignity of two innocent people he did it all from a position of enormous blessing. David remember is the rich man of the parable. God had showered on him inconceivable blessing, and the Lord is exposing his heart of wretched ingratitude. But it's no different with you and me. If we are Christian then we have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. We are the benefactors of God's mercy and when we sin we sin against love. *8 I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! 9a Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight?* To despise something is to think it a matter of no consequence. And I'm sure that David's response, like yours, would be to say, "Oh I don't despise God's word." But whenever we choose the way of sin that is exactly what we have done. Nathan is here exposing two of the hidden roots of David's adultery. One was a profound and grievous ingratitude and the second was a low view of God's word. We despise the word of God when we decide that our feelings, our lusts are weightier than His laws. *9a Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? Why? Why? Why?* David may have asked that the rest of his life - why?

Put yourself now in David's shoes. Imagine how he must have felt. His secret sins are uncovered and displayed before him in all of their ugliness. Furthermore, the words of Nathan have drawn David into an encounter with God. He remembers the Lord Majestic before whom sin is so vile and David is so guilty. This is the confrontation over David's sin.

Our next point then will be the consequences of David's sin. James 1:**14-15** *Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.* What kind of death did it bring forth in David's life? **10** Now

therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' Here we begin to see God's punishments for David's sin. Consequence #1 is that the sword came into David's house, his family. And you know what? That's often where our sin will wreak the most havoc. You can sin like the devil and still do a good business but your family is going to suffer. God promises it. "David, because of what you have done a sword will enter and tear up your family." And this didn't take very long for in chapter 13 David's son Ammon raped his half-sister Tamar and in retaliation David's son Absalom kills David's son Ammon. And you thought your kids didn't get along? David has murder within his family and then soon after, this same son, Absalom, wages civil war against his father. Even after David's death Solomon his son kills his brother Adonijah. Nathan said 10-12 *Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'* ¹¹*Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹²Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.'"*

So, we find in II Samuel 16:20-22 *Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your advice. What shall we do?" ²¹Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened." ²²So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.* This is something I see happening historically. I see it happening even in my short life time that the secret sins of one generation become the open sins of the next. One generation hides to commit immorality, the next will flaunt their decadence.

Let's go on 13 *Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die."* This is incredible isn't it? In the midst of hearing God judgments David groans 13bcd *Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die."* Here we find forgiveness of sin. How beautiful! How sweet this must have been to David's ears. Notice that the forgiveness came without penance. That is, Nathan didn't say that to gain forgiveness you must make a large donation to the seminary or you must say 1000 Hail Sarah's or you must do 400 hours of community service. None of that could work off the sin and balance it out. David

understood and expressed this in Psalm 51:16-17 *You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.* ¹⁷*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.* That is, forgiveness follows not penance or sacrifice, but simply repentance and contrition.

Another thing to see about God's forgiveness is that it came only after the harshest rebuke. Now a lot of people think that true forgiveness won't even mention the sin. They can't see how rebuke and forgiveness go together but they do. In fact, healing often cannot take place until the wound is opened up and made to hurt for a while. But let me tell ya, when you've seen your sin as David saw it and hurt over it like David hurt over it, forgiveness is then so precious, so precious. The Spirit of God is not only called in Scripture the Comforter, but He is also the One who is sent to convict men of sin. The sting of conviction and the comfort of forgiveness go together.

A third thing to note about this forgiveness is that it does not preclude discipline or chastisement. When your young child disobeys you, you have two things you must do: forgive and punish, and they are not at all contradictory. So, we see David's heavenly father saying, "I forgive you, yes, I will not deal with you in wrath, but there are consequences of this sin." Some of you still experience, every day, the consequences of past sin. Don't you? Sexual sins, relational sins, sins of laziness, and drunkenness and drugs. Has God forgiven you? Yes, but the scars, the hurts, the setbacks, maybe the physical consequences still remain. Forgiveness does not preclude chastisement. God says, "there will be heavy penalties, my child." We have seen two of these already. In verse 14 we have a third 14 *However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die.* The death of this child, who, by now, may already be born, is the consequence - but there is another consequence of David's sin which is a cause of that consequence 14a *by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.* There will be those who learn of the scandal and say, "Ha, look what that Yahweh worshipper did! What kind of sorry religion is that." David's witness for God is spoiled and his God dishonored by his deed. When you take upon yourself the name of Christ - his reputation is at stake in your life. Paul said in Romans 2 that the Gentiles blasphemed God because of the conduct of the Jews. And often it is that unbelievers blaspheme because of the conduct of Christians. You have seen it and heard it with reference to Christians in your workplace and Christians in the

national media. It can be said of you and me that when we sin, like David, we are giving ammunition to our enemies. And for one, like David, who has zeal for God's honor, what a pain to know that you have helped the enemy. I think of this and tremble because I know it would be like a knife in my stomach to hear someone scorn the gospel of Jesus Christ because of the sin of me, his servant. But David has done just that and so have I to some extent. So have you.

So, we see these great consequences of David's sin and they are tragically sad, especially when you think they all resulted from David's choice of a few moments of sensual pleasure. As best we can tell, the affair with Bathsheba was a one-night stand. Maybe it consisted of a single hour of passionate adventure, an hour which haunted David the rest of his life. Hebrews 11 speaks about the passing pleasures of sin. Surely this describes the sin of David. He chose the passing, momentary pleasures of sin. Real pleasures, yes, I won't deny that, but passing pleasures that bring lasting grief. I think of the word of RG Lee the great Baptist preacher who preached one sermon, I'm told, 3000 times. The name of it was *Payday Someday* and in it he repeats the refrain, "Oh what a price I pay, just for one riotous day, years of regret and grief." This is the message of Proverbs about sexual sin in particular. In Proverbs 7 we read of a young man who is seduced by a loose and adulterous woman 21-23 *With her many persuasions she entices him; with her flattering lips she seduces him.* ²²*Suddenly he follows her as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool,* ²³*until an arrow pierces through his liver; as a bird hastens to the snare, so he does not know that it will cost him his life.* Oh, what a price I pay, just for one riotous day, years of regret and grief! Young people, listen to me, listen to me, there are some things in this life about which you get no second chances. You blow it once and you pay the duration of your days. You cannot afford to learn the lessons about sexual purity by trial and error. That is why Proverbs 7:24-27 *Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, and pay attention to the words of my mouth.* ²⁵*Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths.* ²⁶*For many are the victims she has cast down, and numerous are all her slain.* ²⁷*Her house is the way to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death.*

I once heard this story from a Christian speaker. He said he was at a conference and after a talk a man about 65 approached him and said, "I need to speak with you." The fellow said that when he was in college he was known as a zealous, on-fire Christian, sold out for Christ. He wanted to be a missionary doctor. But then, while working in the hospital he met a gorgeous nurse and fell in love but

she didn't share his love for Christ. She was not a believer, but he married her. And she gradually snuffed out his spiritual fire. At the age of 65 he said, "I forsook the Lord and for forty years I have wasted my life." He said, "I know God will forgive me and I'll serve Him with what I have left but oh how it hurts to see the vanity of forty lost years." Oh, what a price I pay just for one riotous day - years of regret and grief.

These are the consequences of sin, of David's and of ours. Spiritual alertness can spare us this pain. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Still we are not done. The confrontation, the consequences, now the confession of David's sin. In verse 13a *David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."* The king is surely blown away at this point. Wonderfully, his first response to Nathan is not evasive, it is not excusing. His full confession we find in Psalm 51, which gives us David's response to Nathan's rebuke. But first I want you to look at Psalm 32. One might well wonder what David was like between the time of his sin and the time of Nathan's visit. How long it was we do not know. It seems to have been at least many months if not a whole year. But you can read the expression of David's experience in Psalm 32:1-2a *How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! ²How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity.* Those who know the depth of their sin have a heightened appreciation for the wonder of God's pardon. 3-4 *When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.* Here he describes the mysterious darkness of the backslidden child of God. Surely there is nothing more miserable than a backslidden Christian. God will not let one of His own children enjoy their sin. You read of the misery David was in and why was he like this? Not simply because he sinned. He was miserable, and bound in soul because he kept silent about his sin. 5 *I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; and You forgave the guilt of my sin.*

His confession is found in Psalm 51. We will look at it just briefly today. 2-4ab *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight.* Yes, he sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah but David sees his primary offense to be against God and so it is with all our sins. Sin is not just broken rules, it is a broken relationship with One who deserves absolute devotion. 4 *Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your*

sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge. David says, “Whatever you do to me I deserve it.” This is an indicator of genuine repentance, of genuine brokenness and humility. So many will rebel against God and trample on his covenant and then when they are disciplined they whine about how unfairly they are treated. True repentance does not despise the discipline of God. It does not revolt and get angry over the consequences of sin. David meekly accepts them as his due, indeed as less than his due. And we can see in the rest of David’s life that he never blames God for his troubles. He understands who is at fault. He doesn’t point fingers, he doesn’t gloss over what he has done. He admits, “Whatever happens to me I had coming!” Can you say that? I speak with people who are suffering from self-inflicted wounds, who have thumbed their noses at God and reaped a harvest of misery but instead of seeing their own fault whine and fuss and wonder why mean ole God would do this to me. How refreshing is David.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. David here confesses not only his sin but his sinfulness. He doesn’t argue that it was a mistake. He doesn’t claim that he is, after all, basically a good person. He admits what he is - a fallen, corrupted son of Adam. Let’s skip down to *12a Restore to me the joy of Your salvation.* Surely this was gone. Not the salvation, but the joy, the assurance, the felt nearness of God were all driven off by sin. He goes on to speak of a godly sorrow for sin. He is contrite, he is broken. He will not speak flippantly about “Sure I’m a sinner but I know God forgives.” David is broken of heart by his violation of his Lord. And this is true repentance. This is not the sorrow which some exhibit. For there are many who become sorry over the results of their sin. We regret our sin when we run out of money; we regret it when the wife packs up and leaves; we regret it when we lose our jobs or fail the course, or get arrested. Everybody is sorry about that; but the difference between that kind of worldly sorrow and Holy-Ghost wrought grieving because I have offended my Lord is the difference between heaven and hell. II Corinthians 7:10 *The sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.* The sorrow of the world - the regret over the consequences of sin is light years away from the heart-yearning for purity we read of in David’s prayer. The sorrow of the world produces nothing but death. But a godly sorrow, a sincere confession, God will accept and He will mix it with His grace and turn it into everlasting life.

Many, many times I have prayed this beautiful prayer and made it my own. It has told of true godly sorrow. It has expressed my hope in God's mercy and my longings to live more perfectly for Him. Question: how do you handle your sin? Cover up? Alcohol? Caramel popcorn? Or Psalm 51 whose author is called in Scripture a man after God's own heart - not because he didn't sin but because he confessed it, hated it and turned from it. May the Spirit of God give us grace so to do.