

## Sermon: 'David – Restored at a Cost'

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### **LESSON: 2 Samuel 12: 1 - 25**

Last week in this series about David we looked at his adultery with Bathsheba. He had seen her bathing on an adjoining rooftop, he lusted after her, he sent for her, he had sex with her, he had her husband murdered, he used her and her husband for his own ends, he thought that as he was the King he could do as he liked, David and his desire dominates Chapter 11, but the sting is in the tail for in the very last verse, verse 26 of Chapter 11, where we read, *"But the thing David had done had displeased the Lord"*. You see David thought that he was answerable to no one, but David has to learn that in fact he is answerable to God, that was a hard lesson to learn, and a lesson which brought tragedy not just for him but also for those close to him.

So here in the Chapter we look at this morning, Chapter 12, it is God who dominates, God who reveals to David both the depth of his sin and the consequence of his sin, and that consequence is sadly not just for David but also for his wife, his child, and later for his other children and concubines. That is still so true, we might say that we deserve punishment or another person demands punishment for what she or he has done, but sadly that consequence spills out over the lives of others, our foolish sin brings tragedy to others.

We think of the drunk who is involved in a road accident; the drug addict who stabs someone else under the delusions of a high; the mother or the father whose adultery breaks up the family with dire consequences for that family and perhaps for another family as well. Here in this passage there is a consequence, the terrible consequence of the child born out of David's adultery with Bathsheba dying.

Now this is a hard thing for us to understand for here in the text the writer says clearly that he feels God is responsible for this,  
and we look at that and we ask why it is that an innocent child is seemingly punished because of the sin of the father?  
and I can't explain this at all,  
this is not the God I see revealed by Jesus in the New Testament,  
I can't explain it but the thing I can learn from it is that David's sin had a dire consequence for others as well as for himself.

Perhaps someone here this morning hears this and it strikes a chord,  
I think of the many people I have ministered to across the years whose lives have been wrecked because of the adultery of their husband or wife,  
what they thought was a loving and good and sound relationship turned out to have turned rotten at the core,  
their ability to trust another human being at any depth has been shattered,  
and they now face the long haul of re-building their lives.  
Then I also think of others who are the one who broke their vows and broke up the marriage,  
and so many times I hear deep regret about that,  
marriage gone,  
children gone,  
home gone,  
memories tainted,  
and they ask me how could they have been so stupid to have lost all that was so dear for a brief fling.  
What we do often has consequences for others,  
so please do not throw away that which is deep and valuable and solid for the passion of the moment,  
or for the extra money you think will make all the difference,  
or for the job which you think will bring you more status,  
rather think and pray carefully so that you follow God's way in your decisions.

So David has committed adultery and murder,  
he shows no remorse at the time and none after the event either,  
but now the prophet Nathan comes to see him,  
notice what it says here about why Nathan came,  
chapter 12 and verse 1,  
*"The Lord sent Nathan to David"*,  
you see in spite of all that he has done God still cares for David and wants David to turn back from these sinful ways,  
so God almost pursues David,  
pursues him with grace and love.

I wonder if as you worship here this morning you know in your heart that you are a long way from God,  
if that is so let me assure you that our living and loving God will pursue you with His grace and love until you are back safe in a living relationship with Him,  
so then let me assure you that,  
surprising as it may seem,  
God still loves you and God is still trying to reach into the very depth of your being to touch you with His love,  
perhaps even through this sermon!

But notice that in David's case Nathan doesn't preach a sermon,  
he could easily have done so  
he could easily have thundered out a sermon about adultery and murder and the need for repentance,  
and David would have heard it but done nothing,  
so Nathan doesn't preach a sermon,  
he simply tells a story,  
a simple story about a rich man with many sheep who has someone call by and needs to cook a meal,  
so he takes the pet lamb which is the only possession of his poor neighbour and his family and eats it for a feast.

King David is incensed,  
what a terrible and sinful thing to do,  
who is this man?  
he will be punished,  
and the killer response comes back,  
**verse 7,**  
*"you are the man".*

Isn't it interesting how indignant we get about what other people do wrong?  
We read the newspapers and look at our televisions and believe so much of the speculation about politicians and celebrities.  
We hear the gossip at work or on the street or even here at Church and we pass it on so eagerly.  
But isn't it even more interesting how easily we justify our own actions even though we know deep down that we are doing wrong!

Do you remember Jesus talking about this as well?  
He painted a really funny picture of a man with a great big plank in his own eye trying to take out a tiny splinter from the eye of his neighbour.  
That man with the plank is me,  
is you,  
is David.

Then the prophet Nathan goes on to hammer home his point,  
as if speaking for God he reminds David in verse 7 that he made him King  
and kept him alive in order for him to become King,  
in verse 8 he reminds David that when he took over the throne he also took  
over his predecessor King Saul's house and wives,  
and he assures David that if there had been anything else he wanted he could  
have had it,

**verse 8B**

David had everything a man could want but he still wanted more.

John D Rockefeller was an American, whose wealth was made from oil,  
he was one of the richest men in the world,  
he was once asked what was needed to make you feel that you are rich,  
and he replied,  
"Just a little bit more".

David had wives galore and a harem of concubines thrown in,  
but he wanted just a little bit more.

And of course the issue here is that if you look at these three driving forces of life,  
money, sex, and power,  
you want just a little bit more and a little bit more but you are never fully satisfied,  
and the reason that you are never fully satisfied is that there is no true  
satisfaction in life other than in God,  
you can have all the sex you want,  
all the money you can amass,  
all the power you can wield,  
but if you have an empty heart and soul you will never have satisfaction.

Well David had sinned drastically but David had just one thing on his side,  
in spite of everything he was a man who believed in God and knew God,  
so when God speaks to him through the prophet Nathan he sees what a mess  
he has made and he comes to his senses,

**verse 13**

No great promise of penance,  
no weeping confession,  
no begging for forgiveness,  
for David knows God and understands the grace of God and now that he  
realises how wrong he has been he knows that what is needed is simply that  
he should say sorry.

Now I know that saying sorry is sometimes too easy,  
but I don't think these were just words for in verse 15 to 20 we see David  
pleading with God to spare the life of his son,  
he realises that his sin has been the cause of tragedy,  
that because of what he has done another is suffering,  
he takes responsibility for what he has done,  
and if we look elsewhere in the Old Testament, to Psalm 51,  
we have a psalm written at this time,  
and it is a great outpouring of grief to God for his sin,

***Psalm 51:1-4***

I don't know what has been going on in your life,  
but I do know that if it was something wrong from way back,  
or something wrong more recently,  
or something you are involved in now that you know to be wrong,  
then if you are truly sorry as David was God can deal with it,  
God can set you free from it,  
God can forgive you.

Now be quite clear here as to what God can do and what God can't do,  
God can't make everything right again,  
God can't undo the effects of what you have done,  
in David's case his son still died,  
but what God can do is to meet you as you are and set you free to take you forward.

When I was a prison Chaplain we ran a course called the "Sycamore Tree project",  
and in this course of meetings across several weeks we worked with prisoners  
to try to help them see the consequences of what they had done.

On the first course I shared with the Anglican Chaplain who was running it.  
he introduced me to the three men I was to work with,  
we listened to the talk in the first session and then I began to suggest ways in  
which we could make reparation to the victim,  
repaying what had been stolen,  
meeting them or writing to them to say sorry.

One of my three men interrupted me,  
"You've picked the wrong three Chaplain, we are each in for manslaughter,  
what on earth can we do?"

Now these were Christian men who desperately wanted to make amends  
but who couldn't do it,  
their victim was dead,  
the relatives hated them and wanted no dealings with them,  
what could they do?

David was in the same situation,  
he couldn't say sorry to Bathsheba's husband Uriah for his adultery because  
he had murdered him,  
but he could say sorry to God,  
no human being would forgive him,  
but God had the grace to forgive,  
and whatever it is that you have stalking you from your past or chasing you  
in your present God has the grace to forgive you as well.

Now be clear this is no easy option,  
if you possibly can say sorry and make a practical apology or restitution  
you should do so,  
but maybe that person you wronged is dead,  
or you are not in contact with them,  
or they hate the sight of you and don't want to see you.

Or it might be that you could say sorry but to say sorry would be more hurtful than  
not saying anything,  
for example if you have committed adultery and your husband or your wife  
does not know it might be better just to make you peace with God than to risk  
destroying the relationship,  
but if you do come to God to say sorry as David finally did, do not come lightly,  
but rather with a heavy heart,  
a broken heart,  
a repentant heart,  
for your sin was not just against the other,  
your sin was ultimately against God.

The Bible scholar Dale Davis writes here,

"We expect retribution, punishment, judgment upon David.  
And that is here.  
But we have a sense that we have travelled beyond judgment in 2 Samuel 12  
into a Land of Grace".

I love that phrase,  
"into a land of Grace",  
that is the land God calls you to,  
that is the land Jesus opened up to all by his death and resurrection,  
that is the Land in which the Spirit lives and moves and has His being,  
a Land of Grace,  
a land of grace where despite everything you and I find a welcome.

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