

Session 24 God's Rebuke and David's Repentance (2 Sam. 12; Ps. 51)

I. NATHAN ANNOUNCED THE LORD'S JUDGMENT AND FORGIVENESS (2 SAM. 12:1-14)

- A. This tragic story takes a sudden turn for the good when the Lord sent Nathan to David (12:1-4). Nathan spoke a parable about two men—one rich and one poor. The rich man owned many flocks of sheep (v. 2), but the poor man only had one little lamb that he cherished like a daughter (v. 3).

¹*Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had exceedingly many flocks... ³But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb...it grew up together with him...and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock...but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."* (2 Sam. 12:1-4)

- B. David pronounced a judgment against the rich man (12:5-6). By using a story, Nathan drew David's heart into the story, expressing anger and compassion. By judging the rich man, David condemned himself. Human nature is quick to see sins in others that we ourselves commit, but in other ways.

⁵*So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! ⁶And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."* (2 Sam. 12:5-6)

- C. Nathan made the application to David (12:7-10). First, the Lord reminded David of how He blessed him (12:7-8); next the Lord identified his sins (12:9) and the judgment coming to him (12:10-12).

⁷*Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸I gave you your master's house and your master's wives...if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! ⁹Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife...¹⁰Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me...¹¹Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives...and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives...¹²I will do this thing before all Israel..."* (2 Sam. 12:7-12)

1. **Much more:** The Lord in his great generosity would have given David much more.
2. **Despised Me:** David's sin was personal to the Lord—he despised the Lord and His Word. He had despised the Ten Commandments by committing murder and adultery. Yes, David also sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, the soldiers who died with Uriah, and all of their families.
3. **Sword:** God's judgment on David was that the sword would never depart from his house (12:10). This judgment in David's house is seen over the next eight chapters (2 Sam. 13-20). Four of David's sons died unnatural deaths—his unnamed son (12:18), Amnon (13:29), Absalom (18:14-15), and Adonijah (1 Kgs. 2:25).

- D. **Adversary:** The Lord promised to raise up an adversary from his own family—a man who would have sexual relations with his wives—and it would be broadcast publicly. His son Absalom sought to take the kingdom from David, and all Israel learned that he had violated David’s wives sexually.
- E. The results of God’s promises are often delayed—both the positive and negative. For example, the Lord promised David he would be king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:11), but it did not occur for 20 years.
¹¹**Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. (Ecc. 8:11)**
- F. David confessed his sin (12:13-14). He did this without rationalizing or shifting the blame to others.
¹³**So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.” ¹⁴**However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.” (2 Sam. 12:13-14)****
1. **I have sinned:** David saw his desperate situation before God as a sinner needing mercy. Acknowledging our sin to the God of mercy brings us hope. By confessing our sin we step into the place to experience God’s extravagant forgiveness and goodness.
 2. **Put away your sins:** One of the most powerful declarations a person can hear is that the Lord put away our sins. The Law declared that murderers and adulterers must die (Lev 20:10; 24:17). David lived for the same reason that we live—God is good and His mercy endures forever.
- G. The Lord forgave David, but He did not remove all consequences of David’s sin. His sin gave great occasion for the Lord’s enemies to blaspheme the LORD (12:14).

II. THE LORD EXPRESSES JUDGMENT AND FORGIVENESS (2 SAM. 12:15–25)

- A. The LORD struck the child with illness, even though David pleaded for his healing (12:15-19).
¹⁵**Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David, and it became ill.** ¹⁶**David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground.** ¹⁷**So the elders...went to him...** ¹⁸**Then on the seventh day...the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead... he may do some harm!”** ¹⁹**When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, “Is the child dead?” And they said, “He is dead.” (2 Sam. 12:15-19)**
1. **Uriah’s wife:** referring to Bathsheba this way highlighted the adulterous union
 2. **On the seventh day:** The child died after being sick for seven days.

- B. David worshiped God (12:20-23). The people were perplexed by David’s reaction.

²⁰So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. ²¹Then his servants said to him, “What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food.” ²²And he said, “While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’ ²³But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.” (2 Sam. 12:20-23)

1. ***Worshiped:*** The baby’s death led David to worship instead of questioning God with offense. David accepted both God’s grace and judgment; he had confidence in God’s love for him. He understood that the child’s death did not mean that the Lord stopped loving David.

2. ***Who can tell?:*** David knew that the Lord sometimes relented from judgment (Joel 2:13).

¹³...He is gracious and merciful...and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. ¹⁴Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him? (Joel 2:13-14)

- C. David comforted Bathsheba, and later Solomon was born (12:24-25).

²⁴Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him, ²⁵and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD. (2 Sam. 12:24-25)

1. At the birth of Solomon, the Lord had another message for David from Nathan. David was to name the new child Jedidiah, which literally means “*beloved of the LORD.*” The same prophet who spoke a message of God’s judgment now gave a message of God’s love.
2. The presence of the child whom the Lord named according to His love was a message that David needed to be reminded of during the many difficult years ahead.
3. Bathsheba had four sons; David named one of them Nathan (1 Chr. 3:5).

- D. Michal was Saul’s choice for David; Abigail was God’s choice for David; Bathsheba was David’s choice for David. God redeemed this most disastrous situation with Bathsheba through His grace.

III. PSALM 51: THE LORD WILL NOT REJECT A BROKEN AND CONTRITE HEART

- A. The title of this psalm indicates that it was written soon after Nathan confronted David. It is a model of confession. The place of confession is not a place of condemnation, but of salvation.

- B. David prayed to receive and experience God’s mercy and forgiveness (51:1-2).

¹Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (Ps. 51:1-2)

- C. **David’s confession of his great sin (51:3-6):** About one year had passed between David’s adultery and this confession of sin. It is possible that he was seeking to somehow rationalize parts of it.
- ³*For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.* ⁴*Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.* ⁵*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.* ⁶*Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. (Ps. 51:3-6)*
1. **Against You:** He saw that it was a sin first and primarily against God (v. 4). He knew it was a sin against Uriah, Bathsheba, and others, but the greatest sin was in despising the Lord.
 2. **Just:** He acknowledged that God’s judgment on him was just and blameless and not too harsh.
- D. David’s request for cleansing and restoration (51:7-12):
- ¹⁰*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.* ¹¹*Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.* ¹²*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. (Ps. 51:10-12)*
1. **Create in me a clean heart:** David prayed that terrible inward turmoil of Psalm 38:3-10 would lift from him. Lustful desires escalate when they are acted upon. Thus David was also praying that the sinful desires recently stirred in him by his immoral actions would cease.
 2. **Renew a steadfast spirit:** David prayed for the renewing of his steady resolve to obey God.
 3. **Restore the joy of salvation:** He had not lost his salvation, but he had lost the joy of it.
 4. **Do not take your Spirit from me:** This referred to the Spirit’s anointing on David to be king. The anointing of kingship was removed from Saul (1 Sam. 16:14). David was praying that his leadership calling not be removed. In the Old Testament times God gave His Spirit to empower kings and prophets for special acts of service. New Testament believers all possess the indwelling Spirit in a permanent way.
 5. **Casting away from God’s presence:** David did not want to lose the privilege of sitting in front of the ark to gaze on God’s beauty. This one thing he had desired all the day of his life.
 6. **Generous spirit:** Some translate the Hebrew as “a free, cheerful spirit”—thus without shame.
- E. David declared his confidence in the grace of God to call sinners to God (51:13-17). David would show others how God deals with repentant sinners, using his own life as an example. The response that God wants most is a contrite heart that quickly confesses our failure and re-commits to obey Him. He does not want us to rationalize our sin or make excuses for it, but to forsake it.
- ¹³*Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You...* ¹⁵*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.* ¹⁶*For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.* ¹⁷*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise. (Ps. 51:13-17)*