

Third Presbyterian Church
Midweek Bible Study
2 Samuel - Chapter 11/12
Bored with God

2 Samuel 11:1-27 (NIV)

¹ In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

⁶ So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David.

⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going.

⁸ Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?" ¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

¹² Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah.

¹⁵ In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." ¹⁶ So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. ¹⁷ When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. ¹⁸ Joab sent David a full account of the battle.

¹⁹ He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle,

²⁰ the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall?' ²¹ Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.'"

²² The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say.

²³ The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate. ²⁴ Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead." ²⁵ David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab." ²⁶ When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. ²⁷ After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

2 Samuel 12:1-10 (NIV)

¹ The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. ⁴ "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him." ⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." ⁷ Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the

God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.

⁸ I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹ Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

1. The adage that says the idle mind is the devils workshop means when you are unfocused on God and the plan of God for your life, your mind then is controlled by the flesh. How do we see this as the situation that David found himself?
 - A. What can we do to stay focused on God in that our minds don't get idle?
2. To "adult" means to break. In the context of Adultery, this word means to break covenant in marriage. Sexual sin is not only one way to break covenant.
 - A. What are some other ways to "adult" the marriage covenant
 - B. We have a covenant with God thru the blood of Jesus. How are some of the ways we break covenant.
 - C. How does this understanding of "Adultery" navigate how you walk in your covenant relationship with God?
3. David tried to cover up the sin of adultery with murder. How can you break the cycle the next time you find yourself committing one sin to cover up another?
4. When "Bored" with God we look for something to excite us not fulfill us.
 - A. Explain the difference
 - B. Can something fulfilling be exciting? Explain.
5. When we get distracted, the enemy leads us to the state of denial.
 - A. What does this denial look like?
 - B. What are the dangers of this state of denial?
 - C. How do we avoid this state of denial?
6. If you are choosing not to be regular in your attendance, you have gotten bored with Jesus. If we are not sacrificially financially giving, we have gotten bored with Jesus.... If we are choosing not to be active in serving, praying, we have gotten bored with Jesus and we have become distracted and the enemy has us pursuing excitement and not fulfillment...we have stopped the press and our life is a mess.
 - A. Agree or disagree with the above statement?
 - B. What does it mean to stop the press?
7. Why is it so difficult to do a thorough self-examination of ourselves with scripture being our measuring rod?
 - A. Why is self-examination absolutely necessary to stay humble and have a healthy relationship with God and with others?

8. What does it look like and mean to mourn for sin, Our own sin and the sin of others?
9. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

The Terrible Sins of David: The Evil of Adultery and Murder, 11:1-27

(11:1-27) **Introduction:** this passage is a turning point in the life of David. Up to this time, David had been a faithful believer and follower of the LORD, seeking after the LORD and diligently trying to please the LORD in all that he did. David's heart was so compassionate and just in its dealings that God Himself said that his heart was "just like the heart of God" (1 Samuel 13:14). Imagine having "a heart just like God's"! And up until now, David had demonstrated a just heart, showing no partiality or favoritism for any, but executing justice from a heart of love and compassion for all. Because of his faithful service to the LORD and to the people, God had richly blessed David and the nation of Israel. By God's presence and power, David had become one of the greatest kings of the earth.

But now, tragically, David failed and slipped backward, starting a downward spiral that would end in utter catastrophe for him, his family, and the nation. David committed both adultery and murder, and not only the murder of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, but also the murders of a large number of soldiers whom he needlessly ordered into battle—all in an attempt to kill Uriah. In the practical but profound words of the preacher J. Vernon McGee:

We have now come to the second and last section of the Book of 2 Samuel, which I have labeled "The Troubles of David." We have seen the "Triumphs of David" in the first section. Under the blessing of God, David has become one of the great kings of the earth. However, the sin recorded in this chapter places David under the judgment of God. From here on David will have trouble. His life will be a series of heartbreaks.

This sin causes the enemies of God to blaspheme—until this day. Leering and suggestive, they exclaim, "This is the 'man after God's own heart'!"

The sin of David stands out like a...blackberry in a bowl of cream. It may cause us to miss the greatness of the man. Remember that sin was the exception in David's life—not the pattern of it.

The Word of God does not play down the sin of David; it does not whitewash the man. God doesn't say it is not sin. God is going to call it sin, and David will be punished for it.

Backsliding into such terrible wickedness as adultery and murder always causes utter dismay and astonishment among God's people—in particular when a person of David's spiritual stature stoops to commit such shocking and atrocious evils. But Scripture is faithful in exposing the faults of people, even of those whom it most exalts and esteems. Keeping in mind that the Scriptures were written to be an object lesson, an example for us, we must learn from David's experience, learn never to commit terrible sin (Romans 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11). We must learn to live holy and righteous lives, walking obediently before the LORD, keeping His commandments. This is: *The Terrible Sins of David: The Evil of Adultery and Murder, 11:1-27.*

1. The horrible shame of David, committing adultery (v.1-5).
2. The terrible deception by David (v.6-13).
3. The shocking evil of David, committing murder (v.14-27).

1. (11:1-5) Adultery, Example of— Shame, Example of— David, Weaknesses and Sins, Adultery— Bathsheba, Sin of: there was the horrible shame of David: he committed adultery. Remember the year before, when the Ammonites had launched a war against Israel (2 Samuel 10:1-19). Being soundly defeated, the Ammonite forces had fled behind the walls of their capital, Rabbah. But David's army had broken off the attack and returned home, for David held out hope that the Ammonites would reconsider the peace treaty between the two nations. However, his hope was soon crushed by the remobilization of a Syrian coalition that marched almost immediately against David. Having defeated the Syrian coalition and waiting until the winter months had passed, it was now time for David to relaunch his attack against the Ammonites and to lay siege to their city. Note that it was springtime, the season when kings of ancient history went to war. Springtime meant the end of the rainy season, assuring that the roads would be in fair condition for marching armies and that crops

would be growing in the fields providing food for the soldiers. This is the background to the scene of David's horrible shame, the shame of adultery.

1. David definitely neglected his duty (2 Samuel 11:1). He had Joab mobilize the entire Israelite army, including his own personal royal guard. Joab marched the army to the Ammonite capital and quickly defeated the troops who were guarding the gate, laying siege to the city. But David, contrary to his usual practice, remained in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:2; 2 Samuel 8:1-14; 2 Samuel 10:17). A sharp contrast is being drawn between David and the army. The entire Israelite army, including David's own personal royal guard, went out to fight, but David remained behind. Every able-bodied man was fighting, but not David. He was back home in the comfort of his palace, living in the luxury and ease of prosperity. He had become complacent, gratifying and indulging himself, enjoying the warmth and pleasures of the palace. In other words, David neglected his duty. If he had been where he belonged, he would never have faced the temptation that was about to overcome him. He would never have fallen into the horrible, shameful sin of adultery.

2. Early one evening while lying down, David became restless. But on this particular evening, he got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace (2 Samuel 11:2). Remember the houses of that day had no porches or patios, so the people built flat roofs where they could spend their evenings enjoying the cool breezes and fellowshiping with one another. David's palace had probably been built on the highest point within the city, and he no doubt often walked around on the roof of his palace. At some point he saw a woman bathing in her own enclosed courtyard that surrounded her home. The woman was "very beautiful," and David's flesh was aroused. He *lusted after* the beautiful woman.

A question needs to be asked at this point: Why was the woman bathing where she could be seen publicly, at least by David if not by others? Obviously, some of the responsibility for the adultery that was about to take place belongs to Bathsheba. By exposing herself, she was partly to blame.

3. Being sexually aroused, David sent a messenger to find out who the beautiful woman was (2 Samuel 11:3). Upon returning, David's messenger informed him that the woman was Bathsheba and that she was from a very prominent family:

⇒ She was the daughter of Eliam, one of David's prominent warriors (2 Samuel 23:24)

⇒ She was the granddaughter of Ahithophel, a very trusted counselor to David (2 Samuel 15:12; 2 Samuel 16:23; 2 Samuel 15:34).

⇒ She was the wife of Uriah, one of David's most honored soldiers (2 Samuel 23:39).

Nevertheless, despite Bathsheba's social standing and the damage that could be done to some of his most trusted supporters if he got involved with her, David burned with lust. But even more than the human fallout, David's lust blinded him to the clear prohibitions of God's Holy Word against committing adultery (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:20; Leviticus 20:10; Deut. 5:18; Deut. 22:22).

Disregarding God's Holy command and the terrible wreckage he could cause to human lives and even to the nation, David pursued Bathsheba. Aflame with desire, David sent messengers to bring Bathsheba to him (2 Samuel 11:4). By this time David had already sinned. As the LORD Himself said, David had committed adultery by allowing his heart to burn with lust (Matthew 5:28).

5. When Bathsheba came to David, they sinned. He slept with her and they committed adultery (2 Samuel 11:4). At this point another question needs to be asked: Why did Bathsheba go to David? Was she a naive woman or did she feel she could not reject the invitation? Or had she actually exposed herself so that David would be able to see her when he walked out on the roof, hoping that he would become attracted and send for her? Scripture does not say, but whatever the true reason, the king and Bathsheba committed adultery.

6. When Bathsheba became aware of her pregnancy, she immediately sent the fateful news to David. Note a significant fact: their sin of adultery was apparently a *one-time sin*, a *solitary event*.

Thought 1. Adultery is a horrible, shameful sin. Think of the lives that are affected and wrecked by adultery: wife or husband, children, parents, sisters, brothers, other relatives, friends, fellow workers, fellow believers, pastor or priest. Think of the enslavement to sex experienced by some, the bondage of lust that grips others, a bondage that leads to reading or viewing pornographic material and even to taking part in group sex or in perverted or cruel sex. Think of the emotional problems caused by adultery: guilt, depression, isolation,

loneliness, and a host of other psychological problems that can arise when a person indulges in immorality. Think of the trust and loyalty, the bond of allegiance that is broken when a person commits adultery. Trust is gone like a leaf blowing in the wind, no longer attached to the tree. And trust, once it has been broken, is very difficult—sometimes impossible—to ever reestablish.

Once more, adultery is a horrible, shameful sin that affects so many people and so many areas of a person's life. Because of its horrible, shameful effects, the adulterous parties are warned by God:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:27-30).

2. (11:6-13) Deception, Example of— David, Weaknesses and Sins of: there was the terrible deception by David: he schemed to hide his sin instead of confessing and repenting of it. Thinking that his scheme was foolproof, David immediately began to cover up his sin.

1. David devised a scheming, unscrupulous plan to escape guilt and the detection of his sin (2 Samuel 11:6-8). He sent orders for Joab to send Uriah back home from battle with an up-to-date report on the war. As quickly as he could, Uriah rushed back to Jerusalem in obedience to the royal summons. After hearing Uriah's report, David sent Uriah home to spend the night with his wife (2 Samuel 11:8). The encouragement by David for Uriah to go home and "wash his feet" was an encouragement for him to sleep with his wife. For if Uriah spent an intimate night with his wife, he and everyone else would naturally think the child was his. Sometime after Uriah had left David's presence, David sent a gift for him, probably a gift of food and drink so the couple could spend an enjoyable, relaxing evening together without any household chores to do.

2. But David's deceptive scheme failed (2 Samuel 11:9-11). It was unsuccessful because Uriah refused to go home. Instead, he slept with the palace servants. As soon as David heard that Uriah had not gone home, he summoned him into his presence, questioning why Uriah had not spent a relaxing, intimate evening with his wife. Guilt was most likely arousing some uneasiness within David, an uneasiness that perhaps made Uriah somewhat suspicious that David had an ulterior motive for summoning him home. Whatever the case, David began to throw question after question at Uriah, for he was desperate to find a way to make Uriah spend the night with Bathsheba. Had Uriah not come a long distance, been a long time away from his wife? What was the matter with him (implying that he was perhaps sterile or lacking marital passion)? Why had he not gone home the previous night and spent intimate time with his wife?

Unmoved by David's barrage of questions, Uriah explained his behavior (2 Samuel 11:11). He simply stated that his spirit was *unified, as one* with the LORD and the soldiers on the battlefield. He could not, therefore, be at ease while they suffered the rigors of war. And note he swore an oath standing right there before David, an oath that he would support the soldiers and absolutely not spend an intimate night with his wife. Not until the battle was over and the other soldiers returned home.

Note this fact: in order to maintain ritual, ceremonial purity during military campaigns, soldiers were not allowed to engage in sexual relations. Up to this point, David had been strict about the soldiers' obeying this restriction (Exodus 19:15; 1 Samuel 21:4-5). By having sexual relations, a soldier made himself temporarily unfit for battle (Leviticus 15:18). Under no circumstance was Uriah going to commit this offense, so he swore an oath that he would not do such a thing as David was suggesting.

3. In desperation, David made a second attempt to deceive Uriah, an attempt that was utterly detestable. And thankfully it failed (2 Samuel 11:12-13). David ordered Uriah to remain in Jerusalem one more day, and Uriah obeyed: he stayed that day and also the next day. The reason why the stay was extended is immediately clear: David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him; and he made Uriah drunk, hoping that his drunken insensibility

would arouse him to go home to Bathsheba. For two consecutive evenings, David committed this detestable offense, this terrible evil of getting Uriah into a drunken stupor in order to weaken his commitment and determination to stay away from his wife. But David's scheme failed. Uriah did not go home. He still slept with the servants.

Thought 1. Deception is the very opposite of truthfulness. If we scheme to deceive a person, we are not walking in the truth. We are lying to the person. Deception is the same as lying. If we lie to a person, we deceive that person. And if we seek to deceive that person, we lie. David was living a lie; therefore, he schemed to deceive Uriah. So it is with so many who commit adultery. They are living a lie; therefore, they seek to deceive their loved ones. One of the severest warnings in all of God's Holy Word is pronounced against liars, against deceivers. Listen to what God's Holy Word says:

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3:9).

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

3. (11:14-27) Murder, Example of— David, Weaknesses and Sins of— Treachery, Example of— Cover-up, Example of— Uriah, Murder of: there was the shocking evil carried out by David: he committed deliberate murder. Having failed in his attempts to get Uriah to spend an intimate night with his wife, David spent what must have been one of the most restless nights of his life. And he plotted one of the most shocking evils ever schemed by any man. What made David's evil so shocking, so much worse than other men's evil deeds, was the fact that he had walked so closely with the LORD. And because of the wonderful privileges given him by the LORD, a far greater accountability rested upon David. He was about to become guilty of the most horrendous evil imaginable for a man who had walked with the LORD for so many years. Note carefully what happened, for this dreadful act carried out by David would bring the hand of God's judgment down upon him. But not only upon him, but also upon his family and the nation as a whole.

1. Throughout the night the treachery of David was set in motion (2 Samuel 11:14-15). He wrote a letter to Joab, ordering him to station Uriah on the front lines where the fighting was fiercest. Placing the royal seal upon the letter, David handed it to Uriah. And unknown to Uriah, he carried in his hands the very orders that sealed his death.

2. Note the tragedy of the murderous cover-up (2 Samuel 11:16-17). Knowing that David wanted Uriah killed, but not knowing exactly why, Joab ordered Uriah to attack the city at its strongest point where some of the strongest defenders were stationed. Just as David had hoped, Uriah was killed. But note: some other soldiers were also needlessly killed. David was guilty not only of Uriah's death, but of many others as well. He had ordered an unnecessary battle, for the city was under siege and would eventually surrender without fighting. Consequently, David was guilty not only of murdering Uriah, but guilty of murdering a large number of men.

3. A report on the unnecessary battle and the needless death was sent to David (2 Samuel 11:18-24). Joab had instructed the messenger to expect a flare-up of David's temper when he handed the report to David. Joab suggested...

- that David might question why the soldiers were sent so close to the wall (2 Samuel 11:20).
- that David might also question why the officers did not remember Abimelech, how he had been killed because he had come too close to the wall of the city he was attacking (2 Samuel 11:21, Judges 9:53).

Joab also instructed the messenger to inform David that his servant Uriah had been killed (2 Samuel 11:21). Just as instructed, the servant carried out his orders. As soon as he arrived in Jerusalem, David received the messenger and the report. The messenger reported...

- how the enemy had fiercely defended their city (2 Samuel 11:23).
- how the archers had killed some Israelite soldiers (2 Samuel 11:24).
- how Uriah had been killed in the battle (2 Samuel 11:24).

4. The response of David to the report was no doubt a sigh of relief, a secret satisfaction (2 Samuel 11:25). For in his mind, David felt that he could keep his sin secret, hidden from the public. Emotionally, David probably sensed a free spirit, a released spirit—at least temporarily. He immediately sent orders back to Joab by the messenger, encouraging Joab not to be upset over Uriah's death. To give special encouragement to Joab, David quoted what was apparently a well-known proverb, stating that the sword devours (kills) one as well as another. Joab, therefore, must not lose sight of his objective: he must press the attack against the enemy and destroy their capital city.

5. Note the marriage of David to Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:26-27). He married her as soon as Bathsheba's days of mourning were over, probably a period of one month (Numbers 20:29; Deut. 34:8). Remember that Bathsheba was pregnant, and her pregnancy was probably showing at this time. As far as the public was concerned, she was with child due to intimate relations with her husband Uriah. So in the mind of the public, David's marriage to Bathsheba seemed to be a noble act. He was marrying her in order to take care of her and her expected child. Some months later, Bathsheba gave birth to a son.

6. But the sin of David was a shocking evil in God's eyes (2 Samuel 11:27). David's shameful adultery, his terrible deception, and his despicable act of murdering Uriah and a number of soldiers all displeased the LORD immeasurably. David had committed horrendous evil in the eyes of the LORD.

Thought 1. Uriah's life was over. It was suddenly and unjustly taken from him. He no longer existed, no longer walked upon the earth. Never again would Uriah know the warmth and love of his wife. Nor would he ever again experience the love of parents, brothers, sisters, or close friends. Nor would he ever experience the pleasures and joys of life, not even a single pleasure or joy. Neither would he ever be able to look upon the beauty of the earth, witnessing the lush green vegetation in the springtime or the golden bronze colors in the fall. Never again would he witness the beauty of winter barrenness as trees and plants stand with their trunks and limbs fully exposed against a backdrop of brown earth and blue sky. Every human experience was wiped away, erased, gone forever. So it is when any person is murdered. For this reason, and for so many other reasons, God forbids murder. And He warns the murderer: he will face the eternal punishment of God Himself.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.... Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers" (Romans 1:18, 29).

B. The Rebuke of David and His Confession: A Strong Lesson on God's Chastisement of the Believer, 12:1-31

(12:1-31) **Introduction:** chastisement is never a happy experience for the person being disciplined. Nevertheless, chastisement or discipline is necessary when a person does wrong. A parent who loves a child will discipline the child if he plays with matches. If a parent condones the child's behavior, indulging and giving license to the child playing with matches, the result is catastrophic. The child soon starts a fire, perhaps endangering his or her life as well as the lives and property of the family or others.

Chastisement or discipline is essential for any of us when we do wrong. For if wrong behavior is condoned or indulged, we are encouraged to continue to do wrong; and our wrong often becomes destructive, damaging both property and lives. If our immorality is condoned, we hurt people. If our stealing is indulged, people suffer loss. If license is given to abuse, lives are often wrecked with psychological problems throughout life. If a person indulges his laziness and slothfulness at his workplace, he often loses his job and always causes his employer to lose money.

If any wrong or wicked behavior is done, the offender must be disciplined to prevent damaging or destroying lives. The present passage of Scripture is a strong lesson on God's chastisement of the believer when he sins. Remember that David had committed the terrible evils of adultery and murder. And David thought he had escaped punishment. But God knew, and the hand of God's chastisement was about to fall upon David. This is

the great subject of the present passage: *The Rebuke of David and His Confession: A Strong Lesson on God's Chastisement of the Believer, 12:1-31.*

1. (12:1-12) Chastisement, Example of— Judgment, Example of— Selfishness, Example of— Self-incrimination, Example of, David— Restitution, Demanded, Example of— Wrath, of Kings, David— Rulers, Rebuke of— Sin, Rebuked, David— David, Rebuke of— David, Charges Against— David, Judgment Against— Secret Sins, Example of: there was the chastisement or judgment of God pronounced upon David by the prophet Nathan. Remember that Nathan was a personal advisor to David, especially concerning religious matters (2 Samuel 7:1-2). Here Nathan is sent by God to confront David with the charge of his terrible evil of adultery and murder. Note that many months passed after these sins were committed before the LORD sent Nathan, for the child born to Bathsheba due to David's sin had already been born (2 Samuel 12:14, 18). Obviously God had been waiting, hoping for David to repent, but the king had refused to humble himself and confess his sin. As a result, God Himself took action by sending his prophet Nathan to confront David.

1. Instead of directly charging David with the dual crimes of adultery and murder, Nathan shared a story or parable with the king. Obviously David thought that Nathan was bringing a real case before him that demanded his judgment. Nathan shared the parable of two men, one rich and the other poor (2 Samuel 12:1-4). The rich man was very wealthy, possessing many herds and flocks. Whereas the poor man was poverty-stricken, owning nothing except one little lamb he had worked hard to purchase. He had raised the little lamb to be a pet, and it had grown up with his children, eating from the man's very own plate and drinking from his cup. The little lamb was loved so much that it had become just like a daughter to the man, with the man cuddling the sheep and letting it sleep in his arms.

One day the rich man had a guest to entertain in his home (2 Samuel 12:4). Instead of slaughtering one of his own animals for the evening meal, he stole the one and only lamb of the poor man and served it to the guest.

2. Enraged at the injustice of the rich man, David interrupted Nathan and swore under oath that the rich man deserved to die (2 Samuel 12:5). He then issued the verdict: the rich man was to make restitution, paying for the lamb four times over as dictated by the law (Exodus 22:1).

Unknown to David, he had just condemned himself (the rich man) for having stolen the only wife (the little lamb) from one who had so tenderly loved her, her husband Uriah (the poor man).

3. Interrupting David before he could say another word, the prophet Nathan made the emphatic identification of the rich man (2 Samuel 12:7). In one of the most striking scenes in all of literature, Nathan pointed toward David and dramatically declared, "You are the man."

Stunned by the application of the parable to himself, David was unable to say a word. He knew he had condemned and pronounced judgment upon himself.

4. Without waiting for David to gather his senses and respond, Nathan continued to deliver God's stern message to David (2 Samuel 12:7-12). The message was brief and forceful, a frightening message of divine judgment against the king, a stern message that included three parts:

- a. First, Nathan listed the wonderful blessings God had poured out upon David through the years (2 Samuel 12:7-8). The LORD had given David...
 - position: made him king over the Israelites
 - protection: delivered him from the hand of Saul
 - wealth: given him the king's estate
 - royal privilege: given him the wives and harem of King Saul
 - one nation and rule: unified Israel and Judah into one nation
 - everything he needed: promised him he would always receive anything he lacked
- b. Nathan then listed the charges against David, which included four very specific charges (2 Samuel 12:9). David had actually broken three of God's Ten Commandments, the commandments forbidding covetousness, adultery, and murder (Exodus 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21). God charged David...
 - with despising His Word by breaking the Ten Commandments and committing the terrible evil he had done

- with committing first degree, premeditated murder by killing Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba
 - with committing adultery with Bathsheba
 - with practicing deception by secretly ordering Uriah to be killed
- c. Nathan then pronounced God's judgment upon David (2 Samuel 12:10-12). Having allowed his lust to run wild, David had committed both adultery and murder. Consequently, he would reap exactly what he had sown. Violence and immorality would fill the lives of his family members. David would witness...
- his house being filled with death and violence, beginning with the death of the child conceived in adultery and born to Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:18); the violent deaths of his sons Amnon and Absalom (2 Samuel 13:29; 2 Samuel 18:14-15); and the death of his son Adonijah (1 Kings 4:22-25).
 - his own sons grieving him deeply and some actually rebelling against him, including the incestuous rape of David's daughter Tamar by his son Amnon, Tamar's half-brother (2 Samuel 13:1-14); the vengeful murder of Amnon by Absalom (2 Samuel 13:23-39); and the rebellion of Absalom (2 Samuel 15:1-12).
 - his wives committing adultery in public with his own son Absalom (2 Samuel 16:20-22; 1 Kings 2:13-17).

Thought 1. David had committed terrible sin, the evil of adultery and murder. But God did not cast David away, rejecting and condemning him to hell. For within the depths of his heart, David genuinely believed and trusted in the LORD; and he loved the LORD. On this one occasion, he had yielded to the lust of the flesh and committed the terrible evil of adultery, which in turn led to murder. But the LORD still loved David and wanted to call him back into His service; therefore the LORD reached out for David, doing all He could to lead him to repentance.

So it is with us. If we genuinely believe in the LORD and follow after Him, the LORD does not cast us off. When we sin, He does not doom us to hell. He reaches out for us, attempting to lead us to repentance. But note this fact: just as David had to reap what he had sown, so we too will have to bear the judgment for our sin. If we sin, the hand of God's judgment will fall upon us. God will discipline us in order to bring us back into His service. As true believers in the LORD, we are chastised and disciplined by the LORD when we sin. This is the clear teaching of Holy Scripture:

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2).

"For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:30-32).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

2. (12:13-19) Confession, of Sin, Example of— Forgiveness, Example of— Reproach, Caused by, David's Sin— Chastisement, Example of— Contempt, Caused by, David's Sin— David, Sin of, Result: there was the confession of David, a striking lesson on being forgiven, yet having to bear the chastisement of God. What would be the response of the king to the charges of God against him? Would he humble himself in brokenness before the LORD, or would he react against the prophet of God?

1. In humility and brokenness David confessed his sin, declaring that he had sinned against the LORD Himself (2 Samuel 12:13). No attempt was made to rationalize or justify his behavior; no excuse whatsoever

was given by David. In a very straightforward manner, David simply yet genuinely spoke from the depths of his heart, confessing and repenting of his sin: "I have sinned against the LORD."

2. Responding in mercy, the LORD forgave David and set aside the death penalty. David would not be executed for having committed the sins of adultery and murder. Remember that the law demanded execution for both sins of adultery and murder (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 20:10; Leviticus 24:17; Numbers 35:31-33; Deut. 22:22). Matthew Henry gives an excellent discussion on David's forgiveness and the LORD's setting aside the death penalty against him, a statement that is well worth quoting in its entirety:

When David said I have sinned, and Nathan perceived that he was a true penitent,

(1) He did, in God's name, assure him that his sin was forgiven: "The LORD also has put away thy sin out of the sight of his avenging eye; thou shalt not die," that is, "not die eternally, nor be for ever put away from God, as thou wouldest have been if he had not put away the sin." The obligation to punishment is hereby cancelled and vacated. He shall not come into condemnation: that is the nature of forgiveness. "Thy iniquity shall not be thy everlasting ruin. The sword shall not depart from thy house, but, [1.] It shall not cut thee off, thou shalt come to thy grave in peace." David deserved to die as an adulterer and murderer, but God would not cut him off as he might justly have done. [2.] "Though thou shalt all thy days be chastened of the LORD, yet thou shalt not be condemned with the world." See how ready God is to forgive sin. To this instance, perhaps, David refers, Psalm xxxii. 5, I said, I will confess, and thou forgavest. Let not great sinners despair of finding mercy with God if they truly repent; for who is a God like unto him, pardoning iniquity?

3. David then heard the fateful pronouncement of chastisement and judgment: the child born as a result of adultery would die (2 Samuel 12:14). Why? Because David had given opportunity for the enemies of the LORD to reproach and scorn the LORD'S Holy Name. David was a genuine believer; therefore by his actions he had given an opportunity to show contempt for the LORD. If the child of the adulterous relationship had been allowed to live, the wicked of the earth would rejoice in David's fall and ridicule the Name of the LORD. They would think that the message of God's holiness and judgment meant nothing, that they could continue to sin without fearing the coming judgment. For if God tolerated the terrible sins of adultery and murder in the life of a believer such as David, he would tolerate sin in the life of any person. Consequently, God had to stop the world's reproach and contempt by showing His displeasure toward David because of his terrible sin. David had to bear the chastisement for his scandalous sins, bear the discipline of God's hand of judgment against him. God vindicates His name by chastising David and showing the world that He not only loves and forgives David, but also that He hates David's sin. Note this fact: down through the centuries—even today—there are those who reproach or criticize both the LORD and David because of David's sin, and some who even use his sin to rationalize their own adulterous behavior—all believing that they will escape the judgment of God. But they forget that the hand of God's judgment did fall upon David, beginning with the death of his small child and continuing on throughout the rest of his life.

4. Immediately after Nathan the prophet had left David's presence, the child became critically ill (2 Samuel 12:15). In just a few days he was to die (2 Samuel 12:18).

5. As soon as Nathan left the royal court, David also retired to humble himself before the LORD, praying and begging for the life of his child (2 Samuel 12:16-17). He spent night after night on his face in prayer, fasting and begging God to spare the baby's life. Even when the servants of his household tried to lift him from the floor, he refused to rise and break his prayer and fast.

6. When on the seventh day the child died, David's servants feared telling him (2 Samuel 12:18). The king had already borne so much pain and suffering that they feared his reaction, that he might react in desperation and harm himself.

7. However, David noticed his servants standing off to the side whispering among themselves, and he realized that the child was dead (2 Samuel 12:19). Turning to his servants, he asked if his suspicions were true. And they confirmed the fact: the child was dead.

Thought 1. God will forgive sin. But if we sin, we will bear the chastisement of God's discipline because of our sin. For example, if a believer breaks the law while driving and causes an accident in which he loses his

sight, God will forgive his sin for having broken the law. But God will most likely not restore his sight. The believer has to bear the results of his sin, which in this particular case is blindness. So it is with all believers: we reap what we sow, suffer the consequences of our sin. Yet if we confess and repent of our sin, God will forgive us. We must always remember, though, that confession and repentance are essential in seeking forgiveness. We must be willing to turn away from our sin and confess it before God. This is the clear teaching of God's Holy Word:

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (Luke 15:18).

"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).

3. (12:20-25) Heaven, Hope for, Example— Testimony, of David— David, Hope, for Heaven— Worship, Example of— Solomon, Birth of— God, Love, for Solomon— Solomon, Name, Meaning: there was the strong testimony of David, a testimony of hope, a testimony of being reunited with and seeing his deceased son once again. Contrary to what his servants expected, a wonderful peace and composure came over David when he heard his son had died. In describing David's behavior, Scripture shows David's strong faith in God.

1. David immediately got up from prayer, then cleaned and groomed himself (2 Samuel 12:20). Note what he did next, even before eating: he worshipped. This is significant, for it shows that David longed for the worship and honor of God more than for food itself. And remember that David had fasted, eating nothing for several days, perhaps even seven days (2 Samuel 12:18).

2. David's behavior utterly surprised and puzzled his servants (2 Samuel 12:21). Gathering up the courage to question him, they asked why he was not mourning as others do when loved ones die (2 Samuel 12:21).

3. In explaining his actions, David declared his strong faith in God and in God's wonderful promises (2 Samuel 12:22-23). In explaining his surprising and puzzling behavior, David gives us a wonderful insight into prayer and into the wonderful hope we have for heaven. He declared three truths that are applicable to every believer:

- a. While the child lived, he had prayed and sought the LORD for the child's life, asking God to spare the baby (2 Samuel 12:22). God is merciful and compassionate; therefore as long as the child was alive there was the possibility that the LORD would intervene by saving the child's life. God hears prayer; and while there was hope for the child to be healed from his illness, there was a need for David to continue to pray.
- b. Now that the child was dead, David accepted God's will (2 Samuel 12:23). He knew that no amount of grief or mourning would bring the child back to life.
- c. But this one thing he did know: he would one day join the child (2 Samuel 12:23). Note that he would go to the child, but the child would not return to him. This is a clear picture of hope in the promise of God, the hope of heaven and of eternal life. True, David was saying that he would die and join the child in the grave, but he was also clearly saying that he would join the child in heaven, looking for a country and a city that had permanent, eternal foundations (Hebrews 11:10, 14-16). Soon he would be reunited with his departed son. In the words of Robert D. Bergen, David knew that "the separation would be only temporary. There is to be heard a note of consolation in David's words 'I will go to him.'"

4. Having been comforted by God, David then went to his wife Bathsheba and comforted her. They had both been reconciled to God, and now it was time for David to seek spiritual reconciliation with his wife whom he had taken in a state of sin. Showering his mercy upon them, God gave David and Bathsheba a second son (2 Samuel 12:24-25). The couple named the child Solomon (*selomo*), which means "peace, peaceful, restoration." By naming the child Solomon, David was declaring that the LORD had now given him and Bathsheba peace. Note that the LORD loved Solomon, an indication that the LORD was setting him apart for a very special service. Because of the LORD's special love, he sent word through Nathan the prophet that the child was to be given a second name, that of Jedidiah, which means "beloved of the LORD." This child was to have a

very special ministry in the future, replacing David as the anointed king of Israel. And as will be seen, Solomon will be the appointed person to build the temple of the LORD.

Thought 1. God gives the most wonderful promise to believers: we will be reunited with our loved ones who have died *in the LORD*, that is, those who have believed in and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. For all who have died *in the LORD* are in heaven, living in the very presence of the LORD Himself. Heaven is one of the great promises of God. When believers die, we all enter heaven to live eternally in the presence of the LORD. Listen to what God's Holy Word declares:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:20).

"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

. (12:26-31) **Victory, over Enemies, Example of— Conquest, of Enemies, Example of— Triumph, over Enemies, Example of— Ammonites, Conquered, by David— Rabbah, City of, Conquered by David— David, Conquest of, Ammonites:** there was the capture of the Ammonite capital, Rabbah. This is a clear picture of being steadfast and persevering against one's enemies. Remember, while David was committing sin with Bathsheba and suffering the hand of God's judgment, the siege of the Ammonite capital Rabbah was taking place (2 Samuel 11:1). For at least nine months, David's army had been attempting to starve the capital city Rabbah into submission. Eventually, the siege accomplished its purpose, as Scripture vividly sketches.

1. At some point, Joab captured the city's water supply and sent messengers to report the fact to David (2 Samuel 12:27-28). Because he wanted the king to receive credit for the victory, Joab challenged David to mobilize reinforcements and to join him in the battle. As a faithful follower and military officer of the king, he wanted David to be honored as the conqueror and to have the city renamed after him.

2. As a result, David mobilized the entire army, attacking and capturing the capital city Rabbah (2 Samuel 12:29-31). As a symbol of his conquest, David placed the crown of the Ammonite king upon his own head (2 Samuel 12:30). Note that it was set with precious stones and weighed about seventy-five pounds. He also took a vast quantity of plunder from the city, which was later to be used in the building of the temple (2 Samuel 8:10-12; 1 Chron. 29:2-5). In addition to the capital, David captured all the surrounding Ammonite cities and assigned the population to various building projects throughout the land (2 Samuel 12:31). No doubt these building projects included garrisons and lookout posts to warn of invading armies against Israel.

Thought 1. The lesson for us is that of endurance and victory over the enemies who oppose us. It took over nine months for David to conquer the enemy of Israel. So it often is when combatting enemies who oppose us: perseverance is essential. When people attack us verbally through gossip, slander, ridicule, accusation, or cursing—we must endure. When people hate, despise, attack, abuse, or assault us—we must remain steadfast. Then, and only then, will victory be ours.

When the enemy of circumstances attacks us, enemies such as disease, accident, unemployment, financial difficulty, divorce, fear, depression, loneliness, purposelessness, emptiness, guilt, temptation, or some terrifying trial—endurance is again absolutely necessary. Circumstances, whether severe trial or temptation, can only be overcome if we meet God's requirement for deliverance. He promises to provide the supernatural power to conquer any enemy attempting to defeat or destroy us if we remain steadfast.

Our part—to persevere—is essential. This is the clear teaching of God's Holy Word:

"And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD" (1 Cor. 15:58).

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

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