

2 Samuel 11:1-17 “David’s Wandering Eyes” 9/17/23

It should encourage us to know that even the best men and women in the Bible had their faults and failures just like we do, and yet the Lord was able to use them to accomplish His purposes

Noah was a man of faith and obedience, and yet he got drunk - Twice Abraham lied about his wife, and Jacob also was a liar - Moses lost his temper when he struck the rock, and Peter lost his courage and denied Christ 3 times - And what Lot did with his daughters is better left unsaid

David’s place among these biblical sinners is secure, because today we heard of David’s downfall - David’s notorious moral lapse occurred, writes commentator Matthew Henry, because of three things: “Neglect of his business”; “Love of ease and the indulgence of a desire to be lazy”; and “A wandering eye”¹

We should hear the warning in this passage loud and clear - Because if David who loved God, and was described as “a man after God’s own heart”² can fall into such serious sin - It is obvious that all of us are capable of stumbling

God’s Word supports that idea too - Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”³

King David was a man with a wonderful strength of faith - Just by relying on the Lord, he was able to do many great things - As a teenager he had slayed a giant that seasoned warriors were trembling in fear of

David avoided King Saul’s attempt to kill him, and he united the 12 tribes creating a unified kingdom - He restored the worship of the Lord - In addition, he established Jerusalem as the capital city and built a palace there

¹ Matthew Henry (1662-1714) as quoted by Believer’s Bible Commentary, William MacDonald, © 1995, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN)

² See Acts 13:22

³ Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quoted has been taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version, © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc., (Published by Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI)

Trusting in God, David went from being a humble shepherd boy to a mighty king of all Israel - Based on these great deeds we might view David as being bigger than life - Maybe even some kind of superman of the faith

However, today's reading makes it clear that David was just as human as anyone - Today's passage records David's worst sins - Adultery and murder - Sins that forever changed his life

Also obvious is the damage that falling into sin can do - From this point on, nothing in David's life was as good as it always had been - After this, the Scriptures never record him doing anything great again

2 Samuel 11:1 in the NIV reads, "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."

Many translations have an ominous ring to them, "It happened in the spring of the year," begins the New King James⁴ - We should consider not so much what happened - But we should consider why it happened

In biblical times, it was normal for the king to lead his own army - And from what we know about David, and his mighty men, it seems a little strange that he had stayed behind

However, by this time his palace was built - Perhaps David was beginning to prefer luxury to leadership - Luxury and prosperity can sometimes be the enemies of being faithful and serving God

2 Samuel 11:2 "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,"

⁴ The Holy Bible, New King James Version, © 1979, 1980, 1982, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN)

David appears to be bored - He is lying around doing nothing - And maybe taking a nap - There is nothing sinful about a nap, of course, but it does not seem like David is making very good use of his time

An old saying says, "Idle hands are the devil's helpers" - Times of idleness, when we have nothing productive to do - Can be times when we are very vulnerable

Maybe we do not get tangled up in adultery and murder - But those idle moments may find us going somewhere inappropriate online, watching something on TV we know we should not watch, or picking up the phone to gossip

Instead, it would be better to put our time to good use - Knowing the risk involved in idle hands - We can use those idle moments to do something good for someone - To care for our home or family - To pick up our Bible - Or to spend some time with God in prayer

Bathsheba was bathing like most of us take a bath - Without clothing - And I do not want to be too hard on her - Because a woman in that culture would not have been likely or even able to refuse the men David sent to take her from her home

But she had to know that the spot she chose to bathe was visible from the palace roof - And if you look at verse 4 - David's servants may have taken her from her home - But once at the palace, no resistance on her part is recorded

The guilt, of course, belongs to David - He could not help but notice the very beautiful Bathsheba, especially without clothing - Unfortunately, David went beyond noticing her - Had David looked away and respected her privacy - He would have avoided a lot of grief

Instead, he let lust control his actions - David turned the adultery in his heart into a plan - He sent for her, took her for himself, and she got pregnant

James 1:14-15 record for us the folly of acting on sinful urges - It says, "but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

This should have just been a momentary distraction of seeing a pretty woman - But instead, David's lust for her led him into adultery and murder - Additionally, verse 3 records, "and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

Once David learned she was married, he should have walked away - He was the author of many Psalms - So he obviously knew the Scriptures well enough to know that the Seventh Commandment is "You shall not commit adultery"⁵

David doesn't stop at adultery either - Instead, he piles more sin on top of sin, and makes everything worse - First, he tries a cover up, hoping to make the baby look like the child was her husband's baby

He brings her husband Uriah in from the battleground - With the hope that he would spend time with his wife - And after that he would think the baby was his - But Uriah proved to be a man of honor instead - And he slept at the door of the King's house with other servants of David

When David asked Uriah why he didn't go home - 2 Samuel 11:11 records that, "Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

Since tricking Uriah into thinking the baby was his did not work, David had Uriah killed - "When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son."⁶

⁵ Exodus 20:14

⁶ 2 Samuel 11:26-27a

Finally, 2 Samuel 11 closes with the words, "But the thing David had done displeased the Lord"

The lessons to be learned in today's passage are many - Foremost is the danger of lust - We live in a society that thinks that lust and sex are no big deal - They are great fun, if we are careful, they say

The Truth is that the intimacies between a woman and a man are reserved for marriage - In that context, it is a gift from God - But outside of marriage, it is playing with fire - Because someone is going to get burned

Secondly, look at how sin grows - David did not just look at her, appreciate her beauty, and then look away - David's sin started with looking and lusting for her in his heart - Next, that sin led to action - Those wandering eyes led David into committing adultery, deceit, and murder

Sin is like that - We may start with one sin - Maybe even something, that barely seems like a sin - Yet that is only the beginning - Soon one evil deed leads to another, and another, and another

2 Samuel 11:16-17 "So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. 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."

This was the completion of David's plot to kill Uriah - Notice what else happened here - Uriah is not the only one killed, other innocent men also died - And Joab was dragged into the crime as well - Sin is usually just like that too - Not only does it hurt the sinner, but very often, sin hurts others too

So where is the Good News in all of this? - First, it would be good if we could learn from David's mistakes - Keeping as far away from sin as we can - So when temptation comes - We do not give in, like David did - Turning and running the other way would be a far better plan

The passage also reflects David as a human being - If all our Scriptures ever recorded for us was the David who killed giants, built kingdoms, and worshipped God - We would have a David of enormous proportions

Instead, through this passage, we see David as he really was - A sinner who loved God, but who also got tangled up with wrongdoing - He was one of the great heroes of the Old Testament - But he was not Jesus

Therefore, if God can use a sinner like David - God can use sinners like you and me - We too can do great things - By seeking God's heart - By trusting God - By desiring to do God's will - And by seeking forgiveness when we are wrong

And if we can do the great things that David did - The warning here today for us is that we are also capable of doing the bad things that David did

Perhaps we will not repeat the exact wrong that David did - But temptation faces all of us - Will we deal with it like David did? - And be drawn deeper and deeper into wrongdoing

Or will we deal with temptation like Jesus? - Hebrews 4:15 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin."

Jesus is our High Priest - Who knows our weaknesses - Who knows the temptations involved in life in this world - Yet He did not sin

Dealing with temptation like Jesus is of course a far better thing - James 1:12 "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him."

The warning in today's passage comes across loud and clear - Stay far away from sin - Because it always does damage - Maybe we don't tangle with adultery and murder - But even the smallest sin separates us from God, hurts the sinner, hurts others, and all too often shatters relationships