

David's Sin Incurs God's Judgment

Call to Worship: Psalm 97

1st Scripture: 1 Chronicles 21:1-17

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 24:1-17

Hymn #13- *O Worship the King*

Hymn #677- *Nothing But the Blood*

Hymn #707- *Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior*

Introduction:

David has rejected God's way of escape, provided by Joab's warning, and has succumbed to numbering the people of Israel, contrary to the will of God. Following the numbering of the people, David is convicted of his sin, his heart condemns him, and he pleads with God to take away his iniquity. And while God does, indeed, forgive David, there are temporal consequences; very serious temporal consequences, which come about, as a result of David's sin. David's sin incurs God's judgment upon the nation.

This morning then, we will look at the severe ramifications of David's sin, found in the divine judgment, which falls upon the nation.

I. David's Sin Incurs God's Judgment

Following David's prayer of repentance, David's seer, Gad, arrives with a Word from God. There are temporal consequences, which David's sin has incurred. God offers David three judgment options, which he is to select from, as a form of recompense for his sin of numbering the people:

- 1) Seven (or three - LXX; 1 Chron. 21) years of famine in the land.
- 2) Three months of fleeing from David's enemies, while they pursue him.
- 3) Three days' plague in the land.

Given these three options, David responds with the words found in verse 14:

"I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

And so, David puts himself into the hands of the Lord, recognizing that He will deal with the people most mercifully, compared to sinful man. Nothing God does will ever be driven by ill motives. He will always *only* act righteously, and furthermore, He is merciful.

That said, God sends a plague on the land for three days, which wipes out seventy thousand men from Dan to Beersheba! And furthermore, the angel of the Lord stands above Jerusalem, with a drawn sword held in his outstretched arm, preparing to utterly destroy Jerusalem. But, in accordance with David's hope, that God would be merciful, the Lord restrains the hand of the angel, and calls off the destruction of Jerusalem. However, the angel remains there, because, if God is to withhold judgment on Jerusalem, He must require that His justice be fulfilled by other means. An atonement must be made (we will get into this more, next time, Lord willing).

It is at this point that David seeks to intercede and plead on behalf of the people, hoping that God would allow him and his family to bear the curse of God's judgment, and thereby spare the people. [Read verse 17]

II. Concluding Thoughts and Applications

Having looked at the text, brethren, let us spend the remainder of our time considering a few closing thoughts and applications:

1) Consider again the fierce and sobering reality of the undiluted holiness of God. You know, we talk about God's holiness in such small and comfortable terms. And in part, we cannot help this, because we cannot truly grasp even a fraction of the truth of the matter. Our taste buds are so numbed by sin, and they are so limited in their function, that the reality of the potency of the drink is just incomprehensible for us to grasp. It's like trying to imagine how hot it is at the core of the sun (can you comprehend 27 million degrees Fahrenheit/15 million degrees Celsius?)... and even that falls far short of the potency of God's holiness.

But, there are times in Scripture when we can, at least, scratch the surface, deep enough for us to realize that the essence and nature of our Creator is a thing to be feared, respected, honored and hallowed (Ex: Sunburn, although the sun is almost 93 million miles away from the earth). There is an "altogether uniqueness;" a "vast differentness" to God, when compared to any

other living thing, and it behooves us, to at least, recognize and apply this. Just how sinful were David's actions here -- his actions of numbering the people -- in the sight of God? Seventy thousand people, from Dan to Beersheba, lost their lives because of the gravity of David's sin! Suppose there are 150-200 people in this room, right now. Suppose 300 could fit comfortably in this sanctuary (including up in the balcony pews). Imagine filling over 233 sanctuaries this size with 300 people per sanctuary... line them all up in your mind. That is how many people died by this plague [9/11 - under 4000 people died in total]. Can you imagine the weeping and wailing that went on, from the northern tip of Israel, to the southern tip of Judah? Remember, all of the utter chaos, corruption, pain, sorrow, suffering and death, have their roots in the original sin of Adam who disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit.

Does the reality of God's holiness grip you at the core, this morning? And it is good and righteous! When God offered David the three different options here, He was not just flirting around with random ideas. He was bringing forth various judgments, which would suffice to meet the level of justice, required for dealing with David's sin! And to that end, Jerusalem ought to have been destroyed as well, but God, because of His great mercy, intervened and opened up another way, which we will get into next time, Lord willing.

But friends, take note here of the holiness of God, at least, as much as you can digest by this single event. Sin is that serious in the sight of God. That being the case, consider these two things before we move on to our second application for this morning.

a- Unbeliever; non-Christian, your sin will not go unpunished... even the least of your sins; even your impure thoughts and careless speech will be judged, in accordance with the just and righteous standard of this Holy God! If David's sin caused this; if Adam's sin caused the fall... what do you think will be the personal consequences of your own sins? How will you stand before your holy God and Creator, who spoke this very world and all of its contents into existence; who cannot look upon evil; who hates sin with a holy hatred that you and I cannot even comprehend... how will you stand, and what argument will you give before His tribunal, when you come with bloodstained hands, covered with the filthy garments of your guilt, for breaking His righteous laws? I tell you, unless you have an advocate in the King's Son; unless the Second Person of the Trinity, by whom and for whom all things were created, stands as your

advocate, you will be undone and condemned beyond your worst imaginations... and that, forever, without any "let up" or moment of relief!

The severity of sin is found in the very fact that God requires the sacrificial atonement of His own Beloved, eternal and righteous Son, to justly pay for it! Yes, God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to become sin for His people, so that they might become the righteousness of God in Him! Such was the necessary payment! Such alone could pay the debt of our sins in full! Jesus, the Son of God, took on flesh; He became man, and He bore the sins of His own people, in His own body on the cross, so that, they might find forgiveness, reconciliation with God and true, eternal peace in Him! He became the object of the wrath of God; He died, and He rose again from the dead three days later, that He might justify His people, calling all to repent and to believe into Him, so that you might gain eternal life! There is no other way of being right with your holy God, than through the shed blood of Jesus Christ!

b- And brethren, behold again the love of God for you, in Christ! Your sin is not simply "bad." It is in no way a small matter. It is a gross, capital offense; an infringement against the glorious holy and righteous nature of God... the least of your sins, today, is this bad, in reality! And yet, you are ever, constantly, the object of His undying love, mercy and favor, for one simple reason... you are united to His Son, Jesus Christ, by faith! The sharp and agonizing arrow of God's just condemnation and wrath would be ever upon you, were it not for who you are in Christ! And now, nothing but His smile, from ear to ear, as it were; nothing but a beating heart of love, without regret, points in your very focused direction, because you have been graciously brought into Christ, by the grace of God, and by the grace of God alone! Does that not move you! If a mustard seed of faith can move mountains; what can this type of love, originating in our holy God, do to move us? God's love is demonstrated toward us; it is illustrated and pictured with such glory and clarity, in that, while we were yet sinners; while we were yet, utterly ungodly and deserving of all wrath (to the fullest measure), Christ died for us! Register that brethren, into the inner depths of your being and soul! Pray the Holy Spirit of God to press that truth beyond the layers of your thick, remaining flesh, and into your heart; call upon Him to give you a sweet, undiluted taste of the height, the length, the width and the depth of the love of Christ for you, so that you might be filled with the fullness of God, in Christ! Your sin; in its so-

called, "smallest forms" is no small thing in the sight of your holy God... it's just that the blood of Christ is so great that it completely swallows it up, and brings you to glory!

As we will see next time, Lord willing, God's mercy never contradicts or restrains His justice. It only shifts the responsibility; it shifts the consequences somewhere else. Justice must be fulfilled/served, and that, on God's good and righteous terms. But for now, note that 70,000 were killed, when David's sin met the holiness of God.

2) Notice again, brethren, how David exemplifies a heart of true repentance here:

a- He is convicted of his sin (assumed in verse 10). Again, this is evidence of God's grace toward David.

b- His heart smites/condemns him (vs. 10). David loathes his sin, and makes no excuses for it.

c- He acknowledges and confesses his sin and guilt before God. "I have sinned greatly in what I have done... for I have done foolishly" (vs. 10).

d- He pleads with God to remove his sin. "O Lord, take away the iniquity of Your servant" (vs. 10). David realizes that there is nothing that he can do to atone for his sin. He is naked, bare, and vulnerable before God.

e- He entrusts himself to the just judgment of God. "Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord..." (vs. 14). He resigns himself to God's righteous decree.

f- He throws himself upon the mercy of God, recognizing that he is not entitled to it. "For His mercies are great" (vs. 14).

g- He takes responsibility for his sin and for the temporal consequences brought about by it (Read vs. 17). Upon seeing the judgment of God fall upon the people, he puts himself (and his family) forward, pleading with God to turn His anger away from the people and toward him, since his sin was the cause of this judgment.

And so, brethren, see in David, not only a man with a few marked instances of grievous sin, but also a model example of true and sincere repentance. In fact, Psalm 51, which David had penned, following his sin with Bathsheba, is in many ways, the true "sinner's prayer" par excellence. It takes a unique work of the Holy Spirit of God to cause fallen, proud human beings

to open their hearts bear before God, and to willingly, vulnerably expose themselves as "the sinner"; without denial, without excuse, open and bear before the presence of a holy, righteous, and offended God.

All of that said, God will provide a way of sparing Jerusalem, which we will consider next time. And this will get to, what I believe to be, the main purpose of this text, given as a conclusion to the Second Book of Samuel. For now, note, that in a very real sense, David's request is profoundly answered. While God's hand will not be against David; while God will not take away the blessing, which He has already pronounced concerning David's house and the royal dynasty that would continue in it, at the same time, His hand will be against David's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! And He will bear the real guilt, not only of this sin, committed by David, but of all the sins, committed by all of His people, throughout all ages!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25