

“Thou Art the Man”
2 Samuel 12:1-15
(Preached at Trinity, June 30, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 11** records the terrible fall of a righteous man. We've witnessed the terrible progression of sin. It went from an unguarded look, to unbridled lust, to adultery and then to murder.
2. David was a man chosen of God and equipped by God. In **Chapter 5** we read:
2 Samuel 5:10 NAU - "David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him."
3. Power can corrupt, however. We can begin to feel entitled to our position and we can begin to sin without the fear of consequences. This is what happened to David and it would seem he had gotten away with it.
As we came to the end of **Chapter 11** almost a year had passed. There had been a royal wedding, and Bathsheba had given birth to a son. All was well in Jerusalem and in the king's palace. But the final words tell us all was not well.
2 Samuel 11:27-12:1 NAU - "But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD."
4. What David thought was secret was not secret at all. God had seen it all. (Num. 32:23)
In this chapter God speaks to David through Nathan:
"Thou art the man." – **V. 7-9**
- I. The first thing we need to see is the danger of having our conscience fall into slumber
 - A. Our conscience is a wonderful gift from God
 1. It is the place through which the Holy Spirit bears witness to our soul, continually reminding us of right and wrong. He graciously uses the Law to show us those things approved of God.
 2. Our conscience reflects the right use of the Law under the Gospel where sin is exposed so that we might confess and repent.
Our Confession says of the use of the law for believers (LBC 19:6):
"It informs them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts, and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have for Christ and the perfection of His obedience."
 3. Our conscience is the place where we find the sweet communion of peace in obedience to Christ.
 4. It is good when the conscience of the believer is rightly informed by the Word of God and is easily offended by transgressions that grieve the Spirit.

- B. As David's sin progressed his conscience was put to sleep.
1. He came to believe that the only consequence to his sin that mattered was the consequence of having his sin known publicly—the scandal and the shame. It was the conscience of a hypocrite that is content as long as he is held high in the opinions of men.
 2. David failed to see that the greatest consequence of his sin was the displeasure of God. With his conscience numbed and asleep he believed that he had been successful in covering up his sin. He married Bathsheba and all was well.
 3. As Nathan told the parable David was so hardened by sin, he was ready to condemn another while sparing himself of any guilt. Sin has a blinding, hardening effect as to render us without feeling.

II. God sends Nathan with a parable

- A. It was a heart tugging parable
1. The story of a poor man and his prized possession – a little lamb
 2. A rich man seized the poor man's lamb, killed it, and served it to his guests. It was a story of selfishness and greed and of death.
 3. One of the duties of David as the king was to administer justice.
 - a. David had a high sense of justice.
Psalm 101:4-8 NAU - "A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil. ⁵ Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure. ⁶ My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me. ⁷ He who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me. ⁸ Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land, So as to cut off from the city of the LORD all those who do iniquity."
 - b. But as his conscience was hardened he found it easy to dismiss his own sin.
 Nathan brought this story in the form of a case for David to consider. Hearing Nathan's words, David was infuriated. His high moral standards were applied to others but had excused himself.
Romans 2:1-3 NAU - "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ² And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. ³ But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?"
 4. This was David's hypocrisy. The amazing thing is David declared the theft of the rich man as a capital offense which it was not, but he excused his own sin which on multiple levels deserved death.

- B. Nathan compares David's adultery with other transgressions—one sin enflames other sins.
1. Adultery is enflamed by covetousness
Ex. 20:17 - "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."
 - a. Nathan's parable tells of a poor man with a single lamb compared to the rich man with a great many flocks and herds, and yet he coveted the poor man's single lamb.
 - b. David already had many wives. We read in **Chapter 5 2 Samuel 5:13 NAU** - "Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David."
 - c. This was in clear violation of God's Law and would lead to many other sins.
 God's command regarding Israel's kings was clearly written:
Deuteronomy 17:14-17 NAU - "He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away"
 - d. As I pointed out in **Chapter 5** polygamy results in the proliferation of sinful lusts. God's plan is faithfulness to one wife, to be content and satisfied with the wife of our youth.
 Polygamy invites looking upon other women as possible mates.
 This was David's undoing
 2. To break the 7th Commandment also breaks the 8th. Adultery is a failure to recognize the ownership of husbands and wives in marriage.
 - a. Adultery is a form of thievery.
1 Corinthians 7:4 NAU - "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*."
 - b. After David took Bathsheba from her husband Uriah Nathan the prophet compared it to a rich man taking the treasured lamb from a poor man.
- III. Nathan pronounced God's judgment – "Thou art the man."
- A. It was two words (in the Hebrew) that brought David to his knees
 1. It is interesting that it began in the previous chapter with two words, "I am pregnant."
 2. The previous two words sent David on a downward spiral of coverup and deceit that ended in murder
 3. These two words were followed by God's words of condemnation.
 What David thought he had hidden was not hidden at all. These two words brought David to his knees.
 - B. The situation that David had pronounced such furious judgment was actually his own sin.
 1. The poor man was Uriah and the lamb was Bathsheba. It was David who was guilty of selfish thievery and murder.
 2. David heard the terrible indictment from God

- IV. Finally, David came to his senses and recognized the enormity of his actions.
2 Samuel 12:13 NAU - "Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die."
- A. **Psalm 51** gives us a window into David's heart
Psalm 51:3-4 NAU - "For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge."
1. David's conscience cried out within his bosom. Upon conviction he didn't try to hide or justify his sin. Instead he confessed it openly with true sorrow and tears.
 2. There was no effort to justify his actions
 There is no hint of excuse.
- B. David knew his sin was against God
2 Samuel 12:13 NAU - "Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."
Psalm 51:4 NAU - "Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight"
1. It is true that our sins may involve other people
 - a. David sinned against Uriah in robbing him of his wife
 Nathan told the story of a poor shepherd
 - b. David also sinned against Bathsheba taking advantage of his position as king.
 - c. David also sinned against the nation God has placed under him and they would suffer greatly because of his sin.
 2. When we sin against individuals we must confess to them and we owe them restitution when possible. David recognized this.
2 Samuel 12:5-6 NAU - "Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. ⁶ "He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion."
 3. While David sinned against the people he governed, and against Bathsheba, and against Uriah, he knew that ultimately his sin was against God alone
 - a. All sin is high treason against God
 - b. Sin is transgression against God's Law – He sets the standard.
 God defines what is and isn't sin.
 - c. Sin's against men are all temporal in nature, but sins against God have eternal consequences.
 - d. We may hide our sin from man, but no sin shall be hidden from God

- C. David's sin was a public sin and so his confession was public
1. David's sin was open for all to see. It was essential that he repent before all.
 2. Those in leadership are always vulnerable to attacks and false accusations. The NT gives us instruction regarding the sins of our leaders.
 - a. Elders are in need of protection from ruthless slander
1 Timothy 5:19-20 – “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”
 - b. This means accusations should not be entertained:
Unless they can be validated by two or three witnesses
Unless two or three witnesses deem it important enough to pursue
 - c. But matters of serious, public sin demand public repentance
1 Timothy 5:19-20 – “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.²⁰ Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”
 - d. The reason: because of the effect it will have upon others.
 3. Because David's sin was a public scandal, God's chastisement would be public that all might tremble.
2 Samuel 12:10-12 NAU - "because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'¹¹ "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.¹² 'Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun."
 4. Care and caution must be exercised regarding public confession
 - a. All sin must be confessed before God
 - b. David's sin was a public sin but not all sins are public sins.
David was in a very public position.
 - c. Matthew 18 teaches us the principle and practice regarding private sins
Matthew 18:15 NAU - "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."
 - d. Private sins are usually best kept private
This doesn't mean we shouldn't confess our sins to our leaders or others who can pray for us.
James 5:14-16 NAU - "Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;¹⁵ and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

- D. Those who confess their sins and turn to Christ find God's gracious reconciliation
1. This is the heart well-pleasing to God
Psalm 34:18 NAU - "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit."
 2. There is grace in the Gospel
2 Samuel 12:13 NAU - "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die."
 3. This doesn't mean there are not lasting consequences to our sins.
 - a. God spoke of unceasing conflict for David
2 Samuel 12:10 NAU - "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."
 - b. The child of the adulterous affair would die.
2 Samuel 12:15 NAU - "Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was *very sick*."
 - c. It would be a lasting blot upon David's character. Our sins can be forgiven, but they cannot be undone.
Notice Bathsheba is still spoken of Uriah's widow. The word is literally translated "wife" which is how most translations render the word. David had no right to rob Uriah of his wife.
We see it even in the genealogy of Christ in the NT
Matthew 1:6 NAU - "Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah."

Conclusion:

1. In **Psalm 51** David pleads for God to blot out his transgressions.
There is no mercy apart from Christ.
There is no forgiveness of sin apart from Christ.
2. As the redeemed we still need much help regarding the sinfulness of our heart.
 - a. We need deliverance from temptation
 - b. We need the continued sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit
Psalm 51:10 NAU - "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me."
3. How glorious it is that there is forgiveness in Christ. As heinous as David's sin was, God did not expel him from His covenant promise.
2 Samuel 12:13 NAU - "And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die."
4. God's promise in **Chapter 7** was now in force in David's life.
2 Samuel 7:14-16 NAU - "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took *it* away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."